

# The Assurance of Faith

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WM. W. GUTH



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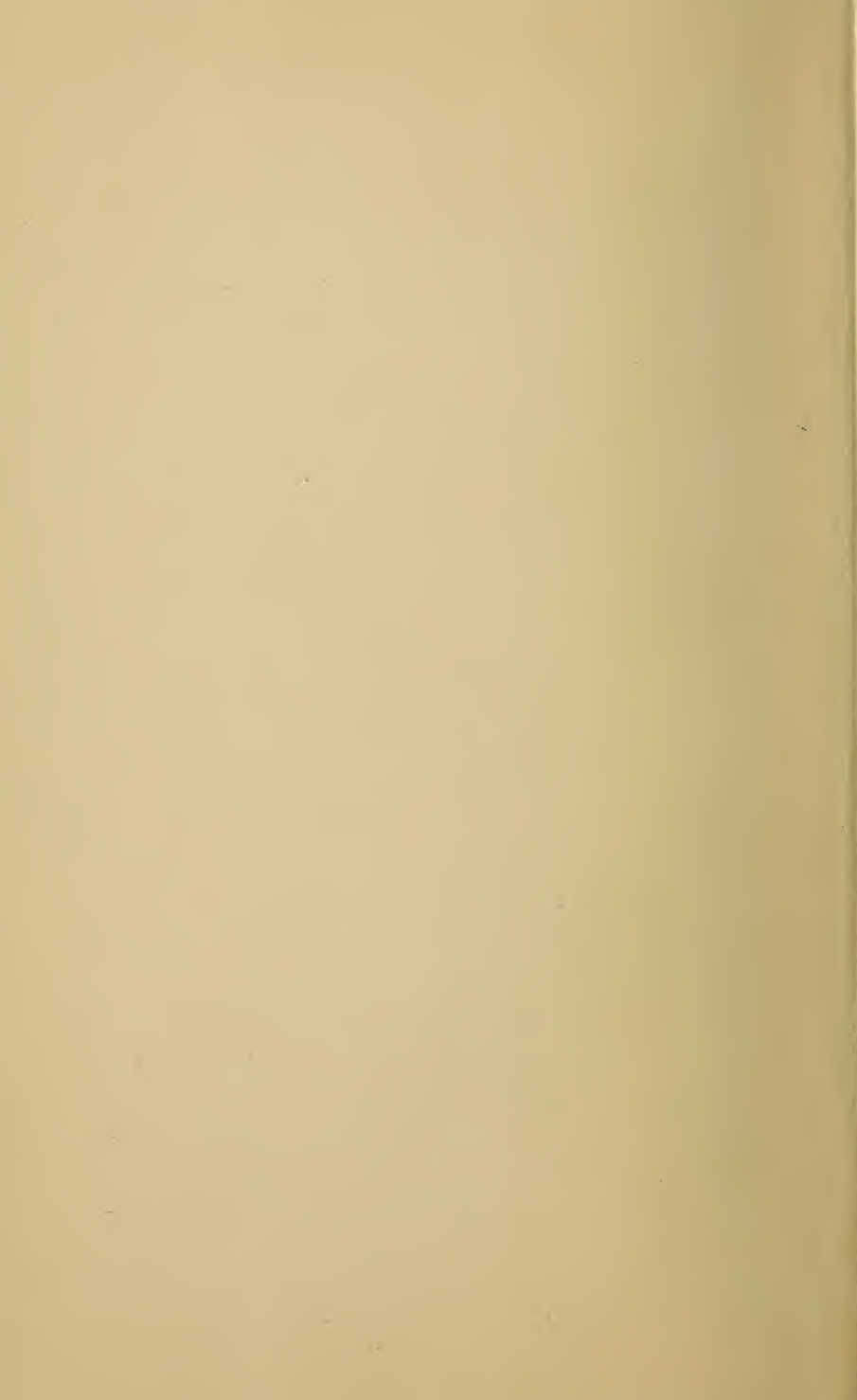
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# The Assurance of Faith.

By

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the Pacific.

*Let us draw near with a true heart in  
full assurance of faith.*—Hebrews 10:22.

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To  
The Young Men and Women  
TO WHOM  
I TALKED IN TERMS  
OF THESE  
PAGES.



## PREFACE.

FAITH has its assurance even more than sight. It is like the sensitized plate which the astronomer places in his camera and exposes before the heavens, full of visible stars, to catch and reproduce the invisible. With the eye of faith man looks at the things that are seen and sees the things that can not be seen with the eye of sight. The astronomer would have but a partial knowledge of the stellar universe if he could not fix by photography the worlds invisible even to the eye looking through the strongest telescope. So man's knowledge would be sadly incomplete if he could not fix by faith the worlds invisible even to the strongest telescope of the intellect. It is in this invisible world we live. It

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is our waking realm. There thought and aspiration and love have their rightful and only reign. There we emerge from the chrysalis of matter into the atmosphere of mind,—the supreme, the creating, the dominating Mind. And our minds can respond to and be moved upon by this Mind until they hold in firm grasp the meaning of life and destiny.

We walk by sight; we progress by faith. By sight we must pick out our way wearily, and are never sure we are right, for we have only our imperfect eyes as a help. By faith we can leap by leagues into the circumference of truth, and we despair not of reaching the center because of its attractive forces pulling us on. To change the figure, we make our assumptions by faith and mount up with wings as eagles. We recognize that these assumptions must be tested, so we slacken our pace and run, but are not weary. We move more slowly



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as we undertake to prove all things we would hold fast, and hence walk, but do not faint. The assumption puts us in the region of certainty. By intellectual inquiry we can find our immediate whereabouts. Faith is to reason what a means of conveyance is to a journey's end. Faith carries us to reason, and not reason to faith. We study to give a reason for the faith that is in us. It is faith that impels us to reason.

In the following pages I have endeavored to emphasize the part faith plays in our being. In various ways, and with some repetition, I have dwelt upon, first, the necessary, underlying assumption of the personality of God, using the term as signifying the Being who lives and labors and loves, who actualized and actualizes Himself in mankind, and who fully revealed His nature to us in Jesus the Christ; and second, the reality and sufficiency of man's

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mind, his ability to receive and comprehend the truth of God, and his need of a submissive spirit in order to understand himself as well as the Almighty and live a life worth while. I have sought to make the papers more concrete by basing the thought of each upon some incident or saying of Holy Writ. What is here said is the substance of a series of talks given at various times before student assemblies with the hope of strengthening youth in firm reasons for religious and spiritual striving and of establishing the cause for an abiding conviction in the assurance of faith.

To give credit to all who have influenced my thinking is impossible. Fellow-students of Borden P. Bowne, however, will not fail to note my great indebtedness to him for what is good in this book.

WILLIAM W. GUTH.

*San José, October 26, 1910.*

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## I.

### THE KINGDOM OF TRUTH.

PILATE was interested in Jesus only as an enemy of the Roman State. A King whose Kingdom was not of this world could do no harm to Cæsar. He was willing to set Jesus at liberty. He could not disguise his contempt, however, for a Man who claimed to be a Witness to the truth. Abruptly closing his interview with Him, he said, "What is truth?" and then gave Jesus no opportunity to reply. Pilate was convinced there was no reply to be given. The verdict of history, however, is that Jesus knew something about the truth worth hearing. His Kingdom, founded on the truth, has been more lasting than the kingdom represented by Pilate. He claimed to be the Supreme Witness to the



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truth. His claim is well founded. For as we dwell upon His life we find it squaring with truth in all its elements.

To begin with, truth is in and through all things fundamental. When we speak of a circle or straight line, we speak of something that is absolutely true. We pay little attention to straight lines and circles as we find them taking form in some ordinary dwelling house or humble chapel. We expect a building to be true. If it were not so we might stop and wonder at the incompetence of the man who built the house and comment upon the danger to those living therein. But when we see stone piled upon stone, regular and true in line and curve, until a cathedral or a palace stands before us, we stop and marvel at the mind and skill of man. Truth is there hardened and set in every inch of stone and wood. The architect knew that only thus would his structure stand. When he drew his plans he started every curve,



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every line true, that when joined together the truth would appear in one unbroken succession, and the image of his mind, which he had transferred to paper, take form in the real cathedral. Had he planned but the humble chapel he would have planned in the same way, for he knew that the forces in nature are true at the center and that if he would have his building stand with these he must relate it to them. We look with peculiar wonder upon the leaning tower, but with no desire to have such a structure duplicated. An architect does not study how he can defy the law of gravitation and make a building fourteen feet out of plumb stand. He studies how to bring his mind and his work into harmony with the truth. So we proceed in life. We plan for our house of character just as the architect plans for his cathedral, by making use of the true and relating ourselves to it. There are many leaning towers in the lives of men

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and women, but no real man will sit down to study how far from the plumb of righteousness he can build his character and maintain his own respect and that of his fellows. His natural impulse is to build true and straight. This is so because truth is at the bottom. It is a kingdom on which all other kingdoms rest. It was in this realm that Jesus said He was Ruler. He proves His sovereignty every time a man ventures to relate his life to His. It is as true as a straight line or a circle, and no one can be led in a crooked path by following Him. There are many criticisms made on the teaching and claims of Jesus. But we have never seen nor heard a statement made by one who followed Jesus that he was deceived or led astray. With Jesus as the Architect no man can rear a leaning tower in his life. According to His plumb line every square and surface is true. He and truth are fundamental.

Truth is also its own best expression.

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It would be difficult to explain to a child what a circle is without showing him one. Once he has seen a circle he will talk understandingly about it without being able technically to describe it. And to many of us a circle remains simply a circle. It is its own best expression. We would be put to a test to define it offhand in terms of geometry. We often discern truth without being able to define it. One who clearly sees the truth needs no choice of words to express it. The truth will be in him its own best expression. And it will not be the man who is speaking, but truth. We lose sight of the man, or rather the man is lost sight of in the truth. Truth has become incarnated in him. He has become one with truth. So he must speak. With every fiber of muscle and every drop of blood he declares, "Here I stand; I can not do otherwise, so help me God." For truth he makes a vicarious sacrifice. The world may howl about him; self-constituted

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judges may condemn; and self-appointed executioners crucify. But he stands supreme, the self-expression of truth, knowing that truth will prevail. So Jesus Christ is His own best expression. He has worked Himself by His subtle power and commanding force into the lives of the world's great men, and hence into its history, its art, its music, its literature. We see and hear and read Him in every masterpiece of art and music and poetry which has had Him for its subject. These with the Gospel record form the composite of the living Christ, which is ineffaceable. We see and recognize Him in the life of every saintly-minded man and woman. He is incarnated in goodness, purity, love, as these find actuality in human words and deeds.

Furthermore, truth can not be arrested in its progress. We may pile a mountain of error upon it to dam its course and throttle its life, as now and then a moun-

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tain of earth will loosen itself in the Alps and completely block the course of a rivulet. But in a few days here and there a drop of water will begin to trickle out of the ground, then a few seemingly disconnected threads of water appear, which in a little while become united; then the earth begins to melt, the rivulet throws off its grave-clothes and proceeds into life, praising God and blessing man as before. Truth undermines the mountains of error and finds its way to freedom. It has ever worked itself through, and men have seen it emerging out of the chaos. So has Jesus gone on unmolested. As we shall see later, no opposition was able to arrest His progress. Death itself could not hold Him. He is as present in the world to-day as when He walked the hills and valleys of Palestine.

Again, man instinctively bows before the truth. He sees it, he is overwhelmed, he worships it. We lay aside a book which



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has revealed the truth to us, and we tacitly assent to it. We talk to a man of commanding genius, and all our little knowledge fails us, we bow before and worship him. We are not made smaller, but larger, for having seen and heard him. So of Jesus. The wise men uttered a prophetic word when they said, "Show us the Child, for we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." They bow down before Him and lay their gifts at His feet. Peter says, "Lord, to whom shall we go; Thou hast the words of eternal life?" The Greeks say to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Charles Lamb put the seal on the words of the wise men in an assembly of scholars who were discussing how they should greet certain great men of the past were they suddenly to come into their presence. If Homer or Shakespeare should come, they would all rise. Some one asked, doubtless irreverently, "But what if Jesus should come?"

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Lamb replied: "O, that would be different. If He should come we should all kneel."

Again, truth is thrilling. There is no enthusiasm so stimulating and real as that engendered by the perception of a great truth. Men are "beside themselves," we say, as they enthusiastically rave over some great truth new to them. They are beside themselves because they stand, as it were, and look at the truth in themselves approaching and uniting with the truth at the center of the universe. It is as two worlds coming together. The sight is so overwhelming that man for the moment is rendered almost incoherent of speech. It is a day of Pentecost for him on which he hears and understands a strange language. When the French scholars had tested Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation, and Newton was computing the results and saw his theory was approaching a fact, he became strangely excited. The figures, the

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room, began to dance before his eyes; he was undone, and needed to call another to finish the computation. "Why the agitation?" asks Emerson. "Because when Newton saw in the fall of an apple to the ground the fall also of the earth to the sun, of the sun and all suns to the center, that perception was accompanied by a spasm of delight by which the intellect greets a fact more immense still, a fact really universal—holding in intellect as in matter, in morals as in intellect—that atom draws to atom throughout nature, and truth to truth throughout spirit." Men of all ages have been similarly thrilled as they have grasped the claims of Jesus in regard to the truth. On the day of Pentecost the many who went almost wild at the perception of the truth as revealed by Jesus Christ were accused of being filled with new wine. Before Agrippa, Saint Paul became so excited as he preached Christ to this kingly audience, that Festus



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cried to him with a loud voice: "Paul, thou art beside thyself. Too much learning doth make thee mad." Luther rose from his knees as he was climbing the Scala Santa in Rome and rushed down the steps almost in a frenzy when the great truth of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ burst upon him. The Quakers had their convulsions, the Swedenborgians their illuminations, the Moravians and Pietists their raptures, the Calvinists their quickenings, and the Methodists their revivals and experiences, simply because "of that shudder of awe and delight with which the individual soul always mingles with the universal soul." This universal soul these men considered to be the Christ. For truth and Christ to them were one. He was the true Witness to the truth. He was a King and His Kingdom was the truth.

These and many other analogies are there between truth and Jesus. "It is only by being loyal and helpful to the truth,"

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said Lowell, "that men learn at last how loyal and helpful she can be to them." It is only by being loyal and helpful to Jesus Christ that we learn how helpful and loyal He can be to us. "If ye continue in My Word, then ye are My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

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## II.

### THE INVIOLABILITY OF TRUTH.

THERE were several attempts made to do Jesus bodily harm. In the beginning of His ministry these efforts were the result of a violent impulse stirred by some truth Jesus spoke which was not agreeable to His hearers; toward the close of His ministry, and because of truths Jesus repeatedly uttered which were distasteful to the Jewish leaders, the attacks took the form of a well-designed plan to do away with Him. All these attempts came to naught, and for a reason Jesus Himself gave—"My time is not yet come." When His time was come they took Him and led Him forth to execution, but only because He was obedient to His Father's will.

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At the very beginning of His ministry, the first time and, as it happened, also the last that He appeared publicly in His own home, the people were filled with wrath when He told them the truth about themselves. "And they rose up, and cast Him forth out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw Him down headlong. But He, passing through the midst of them, went His way."

There was something about His person that kept the hands of men off Him when they would have done Him harm. It was as impossible to soil or obstruct Him as it is to sully or retard a sunbeam. The men of those days could raise obstacles to keep Jesus out of their midst, but they could not keep His influence from spreading. When they would take Him, He passed through the midst of them and went His way.

As we see Jesus going through that

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angry crowd and continuing His way unharmed we are impressed with the significance of the act and follow Him, not only down to Capernaum and hither and thither over Palestine, on up to Golgotha and the cross, but also from Joseph's tomb out into the wide world, striding over the centuries, meeting every obstacle and going through it unharmed, until the Man is lost in the truth, and the truth which He promulgates prevails; in a word, until Jesus and His truth become one. We study Him and He leads us out into the truth; we search for the truth and it leads us back to Him. He going through all hostile and warring elements unharmed is but the figure of His truth penetrating all error and proceeding on its conquering way.

When we look at truth in this light we find its analogy with Jesus holding good. The Jews did not receive His message because they were not prepared for it. This lack of preparation was their own fault.



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They did not want to accept His teaching. They were so engrained with their own doctrine that the least suggested variance from it was an affront too great for them to bear. So they cried, "Away with this blasphemer!" They did not stop to inquire whether or not they in their manner of belief and mode of living had really become blasphemers themselves and were desecrating the Holy Word of God. They were too blinded and too perverse to study the teachings of the Scriptures calmly and candidly, and compare them, first with their own doctrine and practice, and then with the life and teachings of Jesus, to see whether He or they were at fault. It would have taken too much of their time and robbed them of too much of their ease to have pursued this course. They were satisfied to look to their own leaders for authority and like them, too, to live a life of selfishness and abandon which bordered very near upon the dissolute. Jesus could

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never have reached these people. Their hearts were hardened. All He could do was to pass through their midst and go on His way.

There were others, however, who received Jesus gladly and accepted His message. These listened to His word with open ears and at first hand, and not with a wall of precedent and tradition between them and Him. They were looking for life, not dogma; they were willing to judge according to the spirit and not on the technicality of the law. They were simple fishermen, not trained jurists. They could see with the open eyes of life because they were not blinded by rule or resolution. They were then, and they will remain forever, the pattern of open and broad mindedness, the result of an honest effort to receive the truth, from whatever quarter it comes, even although it be despised Nazareth.

As the Jews refused Jesus' message

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because they were not ready or willing to throw off the crust of fixed doctrinal procedure and belief, so do we find at various epochs of history a similar disinclination to investigate and accept the truth. Take, for example, a most familiar illustration: the revolution in thought the Copernican astronomy necessitated. That the sun moved and the earth stood still was the belief of the most enlightened men until the famous Prussian, only a little more than three hundred and eighty years ago, told them otherwise. Here was a new phase of truth, a message from the heavens, which made the rulers of the Church so angry that they would have cast it down headlong over the brow of the hill whereon their intellectual city was built. But passing through their midst, it went its way. The Church could put a ban upon all who believed that the earth revolved around the sun; it could, for instance, compel the great Galileo by inquisition to abjure his ac-



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ceptance of this important discovery, but it could not arrest the word of truth.

The Church leaders sought to hush up the truth which revolutionized the thought of men because they were not prepared for it. Their system was so small and so narrow that it had absolutely no expansive potentiality. So far could they go. When they came to the edge they must either pitch themselves down into the abyss of darkness, or build up barriers on the border of their belief which would keep them from falling over and also give them a purchase to throw all who did not agree with them into the bottomless gulf. The message of Copernicus was a "new" truth. It set all their cherished dogmas, all their fixed forms of belief, in disorder; to accept it would necessitate the complete readjustment of their accepted views. Tradition would have to be discredited. The ponderous volumes which had been based upon it would not even be good ma-

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terial for fuel. It is not to be wondered at that the Church fathers were alarmed and were out hunting for heretics. The tranquil calm of the monasteries dared not be disturbed or the peace of the communicants upset. For if Corpernicus was right the Church was wrong. What a calamity this would have been: the Church forced to admit it was in error!

The truth went on its way, however, quietly and persistently; unconcerned with the opposition and not hindered by it. There were minds prepared to receive it, minds which, even at the risk of persecution and death, would not shrink from looking for truth wherever it could be found. These minds—and let us not forget to emphasize the fact—represented the true spirit of the Church and enabled the Church in a marvelously quick and a wondrously quiet way to adjust itself to this stupendous revolution. As a result we have an immeasurably expanded world; a

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God raised to the millionth power in wisdom and skill, worthy of man's profoundest thought and veneration; and man himself lifted into an exalted dignity not to be measured because of his prerogatives and possibilities.

Or, turning from the field of astronomy to that of biology: It was only a few years ago that the theory of evolution was being everywhere decried and denounced from the pulpit. Darwin's name was anathema in every devout home. Even two such books as "The Ascent of Man" and "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," by so deeply a religious and helpful a writer as Henry Drummond were looked upon as an incarnation of evil. Many a good minister was crying, "O, that men should put such poison in the minds of our youth to steal away their religious susceptibilities!" What were the facts? Darwin vitalized a theory of far-reaching importance to all forms of life, whether

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vegetable, animal, or human. This theory had a religious significance of which Darwin did not even dream. He neither appreciated nor understood it, and had the religious aspects of his theory been left to him for their solution, faith in an all-wise and provident God would have been annihilated. But there were others who saw the bearing of this new phase of truth, a phase which could not be routed by pulpit storming. They began to apply it in the religious field and to give it its proper place and significance. One of the greatest of these harmonists in his day was Drummond, a recognized scientist, a deeply religious man, and a fervent teacher. He took the theory of evolution and applied it to the spiritual life with the result that instead of causing men to lose their faith, he gave them ample field for intelligent and consistent belief in the ultimate realities. He proclaimed a God who not only brought an orderly world out of chaos, but

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who created man in His own image and sent a Christ into the world to help man maintain and not mar that image. Evolution, when rightly understood as a method of progression, and not as the cause of being, is a vital truth, and as such it will pass through all opposition and proceed upon its way. It does not attempt to solve the fact of creation: it deals merely with the ongoing, never with the beginning of the world or of the origin of man. Hence in no wise does it destroy our belief that an eternal God breathed and breathes into man the breath of life, and that an all-merciful Father cares for and watches over him.

There were some who were not prepared to receive this new phase of truth because they were held fast in the seductive arms of tradition and precedent. They were not willing to undertake a readjustment of their mental belief to the demands of physical and spiritual fact.



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To-day there are a few such who continue to make a great noise declaiming against "new truth." But the real spirit of the Church has been quick to recognize and to respond to the inevitable. To-day the theory of evolution, as a divine method of procedure, is accepted as a welcome aid in the teaching of spiritual truth. Thus does truth go on its way unmolested. Sooner or later man must bow to it. In every era when new discoveries are made, and new interpretations are given in all lines of thought, and there seems to be more or less unsettling of established beliefs and fear is engendered which develops into a rage and attempts are made to annihilate the new views of truth, there is only one rule to follow—that laid down by the learned Pharisee and doctor of the law, Gamaliel, when the Jews would have put Peter and those who were with him to death. "Refrain from these men and let them alone," Gamaliel said, "for if their

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counsel or their work be of men it will be overthrown, but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow it lest haply ye be found to be fighting even against God." Persecution and bloodshed in the early years of Christianity, frenzy and humiliation in the later years, would have been spared had this advice been followed. Truth is as immune from all hostile attack as Jesus was when, passing through the midst of that angry mob on the brow of Nazareth's hill, He went on His way.

Jesus went on His way, but it was always through opposition. Every advance of truth has met the same condition. There is always the same disinclination to be led by truth as it is perceived in some new phase; the same persistent holding on to old forms of belief when these have been outgrown; the same stress through which Christ's Church must go because some of its leaders refuse to walk in the unmistakable light of approved research. "Some

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modern zealots," said Dean Swift, more than a hundred years ago, "appear to have no better knowledge of truth nor better manner of judging it than by counting noses." As though a vote for or against truth would decide anything. Again it is to be noted, as Goethe has said, that it is "always the individual not the age that stands up for truth." The pages of history show us not a Church or a people or a nation holding for progressive truth, but an individual in the Church or State or among the people. "The State must follow and not lead the character and progress of the citizen," declared Emerson. This is true of any organized institution. There always is the danger of men becoming tangled up in the rules and technicalities of administration.

"Truth does not conform itself to us." If we are not agreeable to it, it passes on its way. "We must conform ourselves to it." What truth is remains a problem.



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None of us in the conflicting opinions of life may be wise enough to see and grasp it. Time is the best revelator of truth. After we have climbed a hill we have a better knowledge of the country by looking back over it than we had when coming through it. The comprehension of truth, however, is not so much a matter of insight or learning as it is of attitude. We may be utterly unable to grasp the eternal truths that lie at the center of Being. And yet as we have a right attitude to those truths we unconsciously become a part of their unfolding. The Almighty has created a world obedient to His command. The psalmist, speaking from the dictates of his soul, no less truly declares this than the scientist who lays before us the result of his experimentation. The Almighty has also created man, not who must, but who may be obedient to Him. Man's conception and perception of the truth depend on the ratio of his obedience to the Al-

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mighty. He is not left without a guide as to what is obedience. There are certain dictates and promptings of his inner nature which declare to him in no uncertain way whether or not he has been obedient. The certainty of this monition depends upon the alacrity with which man follows it. With him rests the power of keeping it keenly awake to all his needs or allowing it to become blunted and dull. As he obeys he finds voices, not only within, but without, that speak to him and he can follow with firm footsteps upon a well-defined way.

Obedience, conformity, must be the attitude of man to the truth. As he thus walks his horizon will be a widening one, man and nature will spread out the pages of truth before him, unto him will be given the mystery of the Kingdom of God. The parables of this world will be clear to him, for he is within the Kingdom and can understand the symbol of its language. To

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change the figure, he is in the temple of life and can look upon the right side of the pictures in the windows which to them who are without mean nothing. If we have this attitude to the truth, all other things which we are able to bear will be added unto us. If we have not this attitude, the Lord of all truth will surely pass through our midst and go on His way.

### III.

#### SYMBOLS OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH.

ONE of the most pronounced facts in the study of religious phenomena is man ever striving to know God. The face of God is veiled, His lips are mute; yet man seeks to lift the veil and speak with God face to face. Here is a task which may seem as impossible as the task of emptying the ocean. Yet man persists in his quest. Generations come and go, centuries wax old and are born, no man or age has dared to claim that the limits of the finite have been exceeded and the presence of the Eternal invaded. Still man pushes his inquiry: "What hath the Lord answered? And what hath the Lord said?"

A phenomenon so great as this must

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have an explanation. We find it in the universal concensus of thoughtful men. Not the fact of absolutely knowing is the principle or final or directive consideration, but the spirit of trying to know. This spirit is the essential element in all our thinking and doing, and relegates mere knowledge, as such, to the background. The quest of knowledge can never end in accomplishment, it must express itself as an attitude. The ocean of knowledge is deep and wide, but man must content himself with his dipperful. In the very attitude of seeking to know, however, lies man's hope. For sufficient unto his needs is the knowledge which by striving he will be able to control.

In any investigation the facts must first be known and then properly construed. The latter is the important thing. In ordinary conversation where the subject turns on what another is supposed to have said, it is important, of course, to know



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what was actually said. But even more important than what was actually said is to learn what was meant. A statement may be accurately reported and give a certain impression. But associated with other statements made at the same time the statement may demand quite another construction. A few sentences of a conversation taken out of their connection can not be made the sole basis of a judgment. Again, circumstances may be involved the knowledge of which might lead at once to the conclusion that what was said was not meant. For instance, the person speaking might have been under a great mental or physical or emotional strain which might have colored his words with a different meaning; or he may have certain constitutional peculiarities which need to be taken into account in construing the meaning or worth of his words, or his environment at home or in business or professional life may be such as to require a

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different interpretation of his actual words.

We can not depend only upon the actual words used for the formation of our judgments. In fact, it is usual for us to give our words a different meaning than the dictionaries set forth. To know the exact meaning of words is no surety that we shall grasp the thought they are intended to express. For this reason we can not translate a foreign language merely with a dictionary. We can not repeat in English what a German or French or Greek author has said until we have appreciated the spirit in which he was writing. When we have entered into his spirit we can reproduce his meaning without accurately translating his words. Even in our own language we may know the dictionary meaning of every word a writer uses and yet not grasp his thought. This becomes quite clear when we take the most simple examples. In rhetoric there are certain



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technical terms which describe our habitual usage of words in other than their usual signification. We say, for example, a contractor employed several new hands, when we mean workmen. We have innumerable expressions which we use as substitutions for the word death. But however vague they may be so far as the dictionary is concerned, we readily understand the meaning intended. One reason why slang is so expressive is simply because certain words and expressions ridiculous in themselves are given a figurative sense that aptly apply to certain conditions. For example, the antics of a goat attributed to a man who is always interrupting a conversation.

Much of our poetry would be devoid of meaning if we were unable to understand the figurative and derivative use of language. Take the oft-quoted first line of the poem, "Ships that pass in the night." What does the fact say? Two ships meet

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in the dark of night, signal each other, and pass on each her own way. What does the fact mean? Simply that thus we meet in life, live together for a greater or less period of time, and then separate, hoping some day to anchor in the same port. Take those inspired words of Tennyson, "Crossing the Bar." What does he mean when he says, "May there be no moaning of the bar when I put out to sea?" or

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark;  
And may there be no sadness of  
farewell,  
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of  
Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

If we take his words in their dictionary meaning we should be as images of stone and wood that have eyes but see not, and

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ears but hear not, and hands but handle not. Or take those equally inspired words of Robert Louis Stevenson :

In winter I get up at night  
And dress by yellow candle light;  
In summer quite the other way,  
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see  
The birds still hopping on the tree  
Or hear the grown-up people's feet  
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you  
When all the sky is clear and blue,  
And I should like so much to play,  
To have to go to bed by day?

If we read these lines with the dictionary or with the memory of our childhood when we were put to bed that way, we will have a meaning of the poem, but only a superficial meaning. If we read the lines with a knowledge of the man who wrote them: see him fighting a losing battle from his very youth against that dread disease con-

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sumption, see him working with a determination and an indefatigability until work to him had become as natural as play, see him taken away in the summertime of life when he could still see the happy birds hopping on the tree, and hear the grown-up people's feet passing by, the feet of those far older than he in years who still had strength and long life before them—the whole poem takes on a different meaning.

And does it not seem hard to you  
When all the sky is clear and blue,  
And I should like so much to play,  
To have to go to bed by day?

What the poet says is important, what he means is more so, but most of all is the disposition of the reader to understand what he says and appreciate what he means. For back of the man who writes is the spirit that prompts the mind and heart to appreciate, and the spirit of the one must be in sympathy with the spirit of the other. The poet must have a feel-

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ing of what is universal in the soul-life of other men and the other men must have a feeling of that universal, that eternal in themselves, else the poet can not write or the layman read.

I have said sufficient, doubtless, to show that our language is a picture language, full of images and symbols, and that we can not understand it unless we know the meaning of the images and pictures and symbols. The pictures on the Egyptian monuments look quite infantile to us, but when we begin to appreciate what the birds and lions and men and crowns and crosses and leaves stand for we begin to read a language with wonderful expressive power and marvel at the high degree of culture in that day. So the essayist and story teller and public speaker win their great triumphs to-day as they are able to draw word pictures for their readers and auditors and by this means reach the soul-depths of men and women. Massillon, the



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great French preacher, by drawing a word-picture of the imminent and inevitable doom for the sinful made the courtiers of Louis XIV leap to their feet in terror, feeling that the judgment day was actually upon them. William Dawson, an early Wesleyan preacher, pictured so realistically the return of the prodigal from the far country that his hearers involuntarily turned their eyes to the door expecting to see him enter. Father Taylor, as has been so often related, described a storm at sea with such wonderful effect that a sailor in the audience jumped up and exclaimed, "For God's sake, man the lifeboat!" A strong, impassioned plea was recently made for the dignity and majesty and sovereignty of the laws of one of our Commonwealths against irresponsible agitation. These, among others, were the words used: "As well say that the mighty crags of the mountains heaved up from the granite of the bosom of the earth itself shall

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yield and give way and be swept into oblivion by the clouds that form and drift and drive at the behest of the wind over the peaks of these eternal hills." And what do we see? As the granite mountains stand there firmly imbedded in spite of the winds and storms that blow over their summits, so stand law and order and justice, rearing their summits to the eternal heavens, while the noise and clamor of irresponsible and sensational agitation break over them and die as the mists.

This leads us to our point: The symbols of spiritual truth. Our religious vocabulary, just as the other words we use, is made up of images. We take our ideas from the material and visible things about us to express the invisible and immaterial. As the Egyptians in the infancy of language drew pictures of an eagle or a lion or a lotus or papyrus branch to express their ideas, and as we teach children their lessons in a similar way with objects



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and words of derived meaning, so is spiritual truth inculcated, and in order to learn we must become as children. An elaborate discussion of the process is not necessary. What has already been said is suggestive of all that can be said on the question. Our religious language to-day has reference, not to objects and circumstances and customs of to-day or even of a century ago, but of the time when our Bible was in the making. The Old Testament describes God as a fortress, a dwelling-place for His people, a rock, a sun, a shield, He covers His saints with His feathers, the righteous rest under His wings, they abide under His shadow. He walks in the garden in the cool of evening to spy out an offender, He sits in the heavens and laughs at sinners and has them in derision, He repents that He made man and undertakes to confuse his mind and confound his speech. All these statements so far as the dictionary is concerned are

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misstatements of fact and some of them are mutually contradictory. But it would be a dull-witted man indeed who should not understand their figurative and derived meaning and be able to form an adequate idea of what the Old Testament writers thought of God.

In the New Testament the case is somewhat different. Here the writers were striving to set forth the objective value of Jesus as the Savior of man, and hence needed to use the language and illustration of their day. Their language is therefore pictorial, dramatic, metaphorical, relative. The two sources from which they draw their illustrations are Jewish ceremonial and Roman law. The altar whereon animal sacrifice was made, the temple where vows were undertaken and obligations performed, the market where slaves were redeemed and prisoners were ransomed, the cross on which criminals were nailed—all play an important part in

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the scheme of salvation. Christ is a sacrifice and propitiation for our sins. He is the sacrificial Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world, He gives His life a ransom for many, He dies on the cross and hence becomes the Redeemer of the world. This language was necessary, and is without objection for us to-day if we set ourselves to understand it. We do not disparage the use of old terms as long as they have their proper meaning, and we will continue to use them until better and clearer words come into use. But we repudiate these words as soon as they are falsely interpreted. A generation ago the legal aspect of the atonement was carried to such an extent that God was represented as sitting as a judge in a courtroom, a prisoner guilty of a crime has been convicted, the judge demands the full penalty of the law, but his son, innocent and spotless, steps forward and says, "Father, I will pay the penalty." And the father

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executes him in the place of the criminal. Such a travesty on divine love and justice we can not tolerate. Yet much of the discussion on the atonement is vitiated by just such an excrescence of thought as this.

What John and Paul and James and Peter and especially the writer to the Hebrews wrote is one thing, what they meant is quite another, and the spirit in which we receive what they wrote and try to understand what they said is still another. Only as we cultivate a right spirit do their words become real and vivid and life-giving. It is Jesus who helps us to cultivate this spirit. To His words we go for final direction and authority. We find Him, not like the Gospel writers, using illustrations from the Jewish Church and Roman law, the meaning of which would be limited to their particular time, but using illustrations like most of the Old Testament writers that are adapted to all

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times and conditions. He took such terms as were familiar and with these He built His figures and symbols of spiritual truth. He draws analogies between things natural and things spiritual, between one, *e. g.*, who is negligent and hence left out in the cold, dark night, and one who is prudent and hence admitted into the brilliantly lighted hall and merry feast. With such exquisite analogies He “utters things which have been hidden from the foundation of the world.” The wise and the foolish virgins, the profitable and unprofitable servants, the heartless clergy and the charitable Samaritan, Dives and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the Publican, the widow’s mite and the rich man’s gift, all explain the way of the higher life and set forth the laws of God’s Kingdom. The facts of every-day life reveal the conditions and reality of everlasting life and bring God to man as a loving and caring Father.

Jesus is the Supreme Painter of word



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pictures and thus must spiritual truth come to us. Some did not understand Him. Even His disciples at times were in doubt. But to those who asked He explained, and what the Lord said became clear. It became clear because there was the disposition to hear what was said and to understand what was meant. Those who had not this spirit could not understand Him. He rebuked the Pharisees once with the words: "Why do ye not understand My speech? Even because ye can not hear My words." They would not stay to cultivate a sympathetic attitude, and so what He said to them was foolishness and blasphemy. If we have not the spirit to hear, no wisdom or insight can help us. If we have this spirit we need only follow the advice of Jeremiah, "Thus shall ye say, every one to his neighbor and every one to his brother: What hath the Lord answered and what hath the Lord said?" For if we are earnest enough to know the

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mind and will of God to be diligent in our inquiry after Him, we shall be given the key to His language and speech and we shall be able to read and listen and understand. We shall know the truth and the truth shall make us free.



#### IV.

#### THE TEMPORAL AND THE ETERNAL.

As JESUS is talking with a number of people in the temple at Jerusalem, some one attracted by its beauty called attention to the goodly stones and ornaments with which the temple was adorned. This remark doubtless was foreign to the conversation in which Jesus was engaged. But He takes up the change of subject as another opportunity to point a truth and says, "As for these things which ye behold, there shall not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down." He is not oblivious to the beauty of the imposing structure before Him; nor is He unmindful of the impression it made upon the beholder, however often He may have seen the temple. He is concerned more with the purpose for which the temple was

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built and turns the thought of His hearers to the eternal. That which they saw was not permanent. It could not last. Only that for which the stones and precious ornaments were gathered—the underlying spirit of the temple, had any abiding value. There was, therefore, a temporal and an eternal element which Jesus saw before Him. He saw these not only in the temple structure, but in everything else. The temporal and the eternal in life: these He was ever busy pointing out.

We are in danger of emphasizing one or the other of these elements as though the other did not exist. On the one hand, the admonition to look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, has been interpreted to mean that we must be entirely oblivious to our surroundings, not to look at the things God has everywhere placed before us. We have seen the hermit going off to his cave in order not to see the things which are seen

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and to see the things which are not seen. He has had his vision by the side of some clear running brook, he has seen his Lord transfigured before him, but he has not heard Him calling him out into a world of service. His seclusion has resulted in the form of selfishness which Jesus so often inveighed against. Or we have seen the ascetic looking not only upon the material world as a hindrance to the spiritual, but also upon his body as having inherent therein the germs of sin which are ever gnawing at his spiritual vitality. So he sought to lacerate his body in order to give his spirit free play. His view would lead logically to the annihilation of all matter, and hence to the destruction of one's self and one's neighbors. Or we have heard the stoic telling us that while matter is real and something we can not escape, yet we must be entirely indifferent to it, look upon heat and cold, joy and sorrow, as they come, make the best of them, only being

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sure that in the end they will control us and not we them. Stoicism would lead us into the toils of fatalism; whatever is must be, we are in the grip of an ever blindly working mechanism which sooner or later will draw us into its coils. The fallacy of the hermit and the ascetic and the stoic is that they fail to see the real significance of the temporal, and hence do not let it enter into its rightful place in controlling their lives.

The other extreme, to look only at the temporal—that which necessarily must pass away and be no more—is well illustrated by the attitude of many of the Jews in regard to their temple. To them it was a beautiful building adorned with much gold and silver, a constant delight to the eyes, but no more. Its real purpose, a place of training for reverent and sincere devotion, had faded from their minds. This purpose alone was eternal and would escape all the ravage of time.

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Both the temporal and the eternal exist for us. It is our concern to relate ourselves to them. Only once can we cross a stream, said the Greek philosopher, because when we would cross it the second time the water we crossed over is already far on its way to the sea. This is true. The water is the mere temporalness of the stream. It flows on and on and we never can catch up with it. So are we necessarily related to the material world. It exists for us only in time, and the time for each one of us is short. The pessimist, realizing this fact, said, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." To him to live was a weariness of the flesh, there was but little outlook for man. Time and chance happened to them all. The optimist, with the same realizing sense, however, said, "As for these things which ye see there shall not remain one stone upon the other which shall not be thrown down." To him to live, however, was a sublime privilege; it offered every



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inducement to hope and peace and joy, it permitted man to be in harmony with his Maker and to develop into His likeness.

This view of life was due to the significance which Jesus attached to the temporal. It is only a means to the external. When He spoke of the temple falling down He did not see a ruin, a mere mass of stone and debris. He saw another temple whose foundation was as deep as the earth's center, whose pillars were as high as the giant trees and lofty mountain peak, whose arch was the vault of the heavens, and whose music and ceremonial were the voices of untold millions of men and women and children praising God and worshiping Him. This eternal temple He saw in the temporal pile of stone and ornaments before Him. He did not ask His followers to look away from that which they could see. He asked them to look at it, and so searchingly, so scrutinizingly, that they



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would see the soul, the spirit therein, that which alone was eternal, so that when the temporal would pass they would possess the eternal. The temporal is, therefore, only a means to lead us out into the eternal. It never can be an end in itself. As we travel to some distant place on some errand we go by a certain means of conveyance. For the time being we are closely related to the means. We may need to continue this relation for several days, it may become so familiar to us as to seem an entirely natural element of our life; for the time being it will seem to be identical with our life. But the moment comes and we must leave our car or ship. Now we cease to lay much stress upon it, for it was only an incident in our journey. It carried us across the continent or across the ocean, but it had only a temporary relation to our real purpose. That purpose represented the eternal and remained after the other had passed. We read a book and for

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a period we are wholly absorbed in that book. The eye of the author looks deep into our soul, it sees our perplexities, our hopes, our aspirations, and it points these things out to us. Our being pulsates with a new life because we see it now as in a mirror. The book, however, is only the means to this end—it is temporal merely, and must pass. To-morrow, next week, we will remember only a few sentences or a striking thought. But it was a medium to the eternal, its life has entered our life, we can not identify it, point out the stones thereof and the goodly ornaments, for these are no more. But its quickening influence remains, its spirit lives, these are now a part of our mental and spiritual endowment.

So of all education. We are building a structure, stone upon stone. We are acquiring a knowledge of this subject, we are reading widely in that field, investigating accurately those phenomena. But all these

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things are temporal. The old must disappear, the new come to light. The eternal in our education is the development of our mind and our will so that we shall be able to rear a new structure of which we must be the architect and the builder, and in the last stage the sole tenant. If we have not grasped this eternal in our life's preparation we have missed our aim and are mispending our time.

So in religion. There are certain ritualistic forms and ceremonial rites and theological conceptions that objectify religion for us and help us to an intelligent and reverent devotion. But these are the mere temporalness of religion. They are only means to help us realize the eternal in our inner life and to purify our thoughts and actions. Yet there are many who lay so much stress on accustomed forms of worship and the familiar phraseology in religious speech that when these are changed or taken away their religion is gone. So

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in the habits of dress and adornment and the formalities of social convention and usage, and the necessity of supplying our physical wants and comforts. These are only the means to help us appear respectable and conduct ourselves properly and meet the demands of daily life. When we live for dress and social form and money getting and act as though we had found the end and not only the means of life, we have hitched our chariots to a comet, and with the comet must disappear.

We realize only too well how uncertain life is, how we are ever in the continual flow of the temporal, that all things must pass from our grasp. The cry of mankind, therefore, is for the eternal, something which he can place under his feet and stand on firmly. For this the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain. The search for this has sent many a storm-tossed soul into the cloister. For in the intense moments of calm that come over



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us all we can not help but hear the noise and plaintive cry in the deeps of our souls as of a bird beating against its cage and begging for release out into its native freedom. The man who can lead us to a belief in the abiding touches the feeling of eternity in us. He ever commands our attention, and if he can but make us see the wider, permanent world in which we may have a part, he will save us from this world and transform our lives from being the merely incidental in a fleeting world to the living realities of an eternal world.

This Jesus does for us. He insists upon the reality of the material world and shows us how we must be a part thereof, living in it and ever meeting all its diversity of condition and demand. But He tells us to seek in the outward forms and conditions of life the inner meaning and essence, to look behind the material and the temporal for the spiritual and eternal. He brings us a message of the eternal. Everywhere

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and always He revealed and represented the eternal. He leads us confidently to believe that in this passing show of life there is an abiding element, that as we can reach down and dip from the flowing stream a cup of cold water which shall quench our thirst and strengthen our souls, so can we draw deep from the fountain springs of life which are ever sending their streams onward and take our portion thereof which shall be to us power and sustenance. He shows us the reality of that larger world for which we were born. In this world Jesus lived, and He declared it possible for us to enter into it with Him. He would immediately usher us therein. This world in which we are so prone to remain is a world for children with limited perspective, that one is the world for men with lofty aims, seeking an ever-widening horizon. There men come into their true manhood, for they put away their childish things and cease to speak



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and understand and think as children. There they come into their manly estate, they are their own administrators and guardians. They may plan larger and more worthy pursuits and embark upon those vast and splendid careers which that larger universe offers. Base indeed and circumscribed and comfortless is this present life when it becomes a mere pursuit of sensuous pleasure and vast wealth and worldly honors, mere incidentals of life,

Like the rainbow's lovely form  
Evanishing amid the storm.

It is worthy and to be desired, however, when we see that it is but the outer court through which we must pass into the real temple of life, where we can see the flood of light streaming through its windows, whose beautiful and suggestive designs had no meaning for us from without; where we can hear the music of its choir and understand its notes, whose loud and intense

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chords were only confusion to us from without and whose subdued and comforting tones were unheard; where we can take our places with men and women of like mind with us and join in the inspiring service of devotion to and worship of him whose we are and whom we must serve.

Citizens of two worlds: these we are—a temporal and an eternal—the higher ever drawing out our best and leading us to the better. As the Almighty has shown us in nature that our earth is explicable only in relation to a larger cosmos on which it must depend, so in Jesus Christ He has shown us that our world can only be understood in relation to that larger world over which the Spirit of Christ rules and to which we must turn our sincerest thought and most ardent endeavor. Thus we have the eternal in the temporal. Not one stone will remain upon another, but we will have entered that larger estate wherein we can dispense with such smaller

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needs. Faith, hope, and love will remain, and the desire for righteousness, and the pursuit of knowledge, and the inspiration of the beautiful and the good. For these are the expressions of the eternal thought and will from which the world came forth and by which it forever goes onward. In relation to this Eternal Being only are permanence and stability to be considered. Take Him out of the world and it will become a blind mass. Take Him out of our lives and they will be as fruitless as a tree from which the sap has ceased to flow, as dark as a wire cut off from its current, as lifeless as a coal from which the carbon has been burnt. If we keep God in our lives we lay hold on the eternal within us and enter that larger life where all the powers of mind and soul have free play and worthy stimulus. "For this is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

## V.

### APPROACHES TO GOD.

THERE are two ways of finding God. These ways are so comprehensive in their scope as to exclude all others. The one way is through nature, or to use a term which the advocates of this way delight to use, through cosmic forces. This term is sufficiently vague for all except those who feel themselves especially initiated into its mysteries. And the vagueness of the words sticks also to the way. For it must be explained what cosmic forces are and how they can lead to God. A child would not know what the term meant, and an older person must walk in an intellectual valley of the shadow until he puts himself to the task of dispelling the gloom. Even then the end is more apt to be darkness than light.

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The other way of finding God is through man. When we speak of man we have a connotation which even the child appreciates. It does not have to be told what man is, for there is its father and there are its uncles, perhaps, and a host of other men whom it knows. The child understands at once when we speak about a man. The very term suggests certain ideas to its infantile intellect. It suggests power: a child's father can do anything. It suggests wisdom: a child's father knows everything. It suggests goodness: a child's father is the embodiment of virtue. We question the child mind on these points and find it has the very highest type of manhood in consideration. The drunkard is loathsome, the tramp is to be feared, the thief and robber to be shunned as darkness. Such perverts rightly have no place in the child's definition of man; they are not included in its human category.

These child ideas have to be modified.



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They do not lead at once to the solution of the question: who, where, and what is God? There is something about the idea of man, however, which is clear and tangible even to a child. The more we study man in his best estate and truest worth the more are we led up to a Supreme Being who is the Author of man's being, a Being in whom wisdom and power and goodness originate and find expression.

Here are two ways of trying to find God: the one through physical nature, the other through human life. The question put nineteen centuries ago on a Sabbath day in a Galilean cornfield is still a pertinent one and goes to the root of the question, "How much better is a man than a sheep?" The question was up as to the relative value of saving the life or relieving the distress of a dumb beast or ministering in like manner to a human soul. The question was its own answer, "How much better is a man than a sheep?" Leaving



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the comparison of man with beast thus answered, let us go beyond or below the range of brute creation to that of physical nature, and put this question: How much better is a man than a tree or a flower or a mountain or the sea? Our souls are charmed with the beauties, the grandeur, the breath-taking wonders, and illimitable possibilities of inanimate creation. Yet what are these when man is put in the balance and truly studied? The mind, the will, the energy, the possibilities of man—these are the noble, thought-arresting, conviction-compelling characteristics we discover when we look at man for whom the world was made and who is the real and vital and energizing center of the physical universe.

Tennyson looked at a flower in a crannied wall and after mature reflection registered the imperative condition precedent to all knowledge. If he could only know all about that flower there in its crannies

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he would know what God and man is. He could not know. Nature to that extent is a sealed book. Yet he could turn from the flower and look into the cradle of the last born babe and in one glance see more of God than all the rocks and rills and fields and flowers could tell him.

When we look at these two ways of trying to find God we see that one is on a lower, the other on a higher level. The one deals with the strata of the hills and the rocks in the earth, with protoplasm and nerve-cells, and things that live in the water and creep upon the ground and hide themselves in jungles; the other deals with mind and heart and will, with intellect, with love, with service, with self-sacrifice.

Following this lower way, turning now and then into its by-paths, forming an acquaintance with the life that throngs this pathway—the swimming and the creeping and the swinging expressions of life—some very good men have found God. But it

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is not *the* highway to God, but *a* by-way. It is a devious way and also a dangerous when followed only. There are the thick undergrowth of the jungle which causes much stumbling, and the mosses and other parasites hanging from the trees which drop their poisonous germs; miasma and malaria are abroad. It takes a good constitution, a stout heart, a cool head, and a steady nerve to tread this path. Even then many good men who go in thereat come to confusion and are overwhelmed by doubt. It is the materialistic agnostic's way of finding God. He says: believe as little as possible, take nothing for granted, accept only what the eye can see or a rigorous logic can prove. Then he undertakes to give us his belief, which to believe makes a greater draft on the intellect than the belief of a childlike faith. As "living matter, plants, animals and man, came about" through the "unconscious" working of "laws inherent" in "world-evolving

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stuff,”—“So science commonly supposes,” so the soul—if there be a soul—and the intellect evolved from the ooze of a slime pit. “Morality is refined selfishness. Men are good because it pays them to be. Morality’s roots are in the blackest subsoil of human character. From selfishness that has no wish except to gratify brutish appetite and passion has been evolved all that we know and admire in justice, mercy, altruism, and the personal virtues.” It is a breath of fresh air we breathe in the saying of Him whose hand was on the very pulse of humanity and whose diagnosis of humanity’s disease still stands the test of expert investigation. “Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?” “A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” Neither are justice and mercy and altruism and the personal virtues evolved from the blackest subsoil of human character and

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with no wish except to gratify brutish appetite and passion. Every approach to God must fail if it can not account for goodness and mercy and altruism. Hence cosmic forces fail as an approach to God.

Turn from this approach to God on the lower levels and mount up to the higher altitude where the goal of creation, man, lives and moves and has his being. The line of the poet which says every prospect of nature pleases and only man is vile is true only of some men. Man by nature is not vile. He is the noblest creation of God, made a little lower than the angels. There is the animal in him, and if he gives this full play he can descend even to the level of the brute. But there is also the divine in him, and with this under development he can mount ever higher and with the ease of a bird spreading its wings to fly. The newspapers report that an overland train on the Santa Fe railroad, while running fifty miles an hour across the dry



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and burning Mohave Desert, was stopped by a man who was tending a few head of cattle. The train men hurried to supply him with water, because there is a law in Nevada that requires every train to stop instantly when flagged anywhere in the desert by any one needing water. Train schedules fly into atoms before this human provision. Ask a man dying from thirst on the desert to look at the surrounding nature and find God, and his reply will be a bitter curse or a helpless wail. Tell him to hold up his hand, even though it be feeble, before an onrushing one-hundred-thousand-weight of steel and let him see men like him hasten with life-giving water and he will see God, although he may not recognize Him.

During the awful conflagration that followed the earthquake in San Francisco men and women and children were seen going along the desolated streets to places of refuge holding each other by the hand.



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Even strong men were not ashamed to go through the streets holding each other's hands. Ah, the touch of a human hand! That was all that many of the sufferers had left. The very earth trembling beneath their feet, home destroyed, business ruined, the fruit of a lifetime gone in a moment. What mockery it would have been to have said to those stricken people: Look at the manifestation of Nature, and in the earthquake and the fire see your God! Yet they felt Him in every warm handclasp, and knew that hope was not shaken and love was not burned.

Sickness or death enters the home. The shadows are lengthening. There is that awful stillness when every sound seems hushed except the one voice that tells of approaching distress or loneliness. One might think of taking a walk abroad under such circumstances and finding comfort in the meadows and hills, or of turning to a favorite horse or dog and finding a real

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note of sympathy. But only when a friend or loved one comes and clasps our hand and speaks with the silent look of the eyes come the sustenance and hope that enable us to hear that other voice saying, "Be still and know that I am God." With strong resignation we can then cry, "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him." Through man is man led to God and saved. Companionship is man's salvation. Solitary confinement is far more dreaded than the rack or the gallows or death itself.

When Browning brings David before Saul to dispel the king's melancholy, he lets the musician play first the gladsome songs of nature; the tunes which all the sheep and birds know. But Saul does not stir. He then plays the rollicking notes of the harvest songs when the reapers are full of joy. But Saul does not stir. He plays then the marriage song and the war strains, but Saul only groans. Then the sweet singer touches the notes of man-

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hood's prime vigor and leads Saul to see that his Savior must be man, a man who could do most and bear most for mankind.

“O Saul, it shall be  
A Face like my face that receives thee;  
a Man like to me,  
Thou shalt love and be loved by forever;  
a Hand like this hand  
Shall throw open the gates of new life  
to thee! See the Christ stand!”

To find God through man is man's salvation. And Jesus the God-man, the link between God and man, leads us to the very throne of the Almighty and we feel comforted and satisfied when He interprets God for us. As the agnostic must make his comparisons, if they are to be valid, from the highest type evolved, so do we look at the best, the noblest, the truest we know in mankind, and make our judgment accordingly. We are not ashamed to turn with Peter to Jesus and say, “Lord, to whom else can we go but to Thee?”

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In the criticism that has centered about Jesus, there are two points that disputants agree upon. These two points are seen from every vantage just as the twin peaks of the Jungfrau ever lift up their snowy heads. These two points are, first, that Jesus is the most perfect type of manhood history knows, and second, that none has revealed God to man more clearly than He. In spite of the caustic attacks made upon Jesus by French or German or English critic, these two points rise clear above the smoke even as the mountain-top stands in the clear heaven above the fog. What Peter said on that day long ago history has been repeating ever since and with increasing emphasis: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." His words were the expression of His own true life. As we look upon Jesus as the man, the lover, the sympathizer, the sacrificer, we feel wonderfully akin to Him because He shows us in the clearest

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light the very characteristics in man which most appeal to us and upon which we are most dependent. Man needs the love, the sympathy, the confidence of man. If he had not these to turn to, this world would be unkind and cruel and God a very distant and indifferent stepfather.

“Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life,”—the sentence does not end here; it goes on—“and we believe and know that Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.” These last words are a stumbling-block for many. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” As we seek to understand these words we forget all about Jesus down in the very midst of humanity ever lifting men and women up to God, and lose ourselves in metaphysical questionings as to how Jesus came into the world. We magnify the incidental to the importance of the vital. We do not ordinarily ask first where a man came from, but what he has done.



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There is a natural tendency to immortalize the youth of every great man. Had he not been great, however, we should never have heard anything about his youth. His acts are the important thing. We are not called upon to believe Jesus was divine primarily because of certain miracles which He is said to have performed. We can believe that He was divine, yes, and have firm faith in the miracles also—although Jesus never laid any emphasis on miracles—because of what Jesus could accomplish in His day, and has accomplished ever since, and accomplishes to-day. We believe in the Christ of the Gospels because of the Christ of history. We believe He could have performed miracles in His day because He has been performing miracles ever since, making the waste places glad, dispelling darkness, enthroning love.

Peter called Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God. In the Revised Version we will find him quoted as having said

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merely, "Thou art the Holy One of God." While there may thus seem a discrepancy as to the words Peter used, there is absolutely none as to the thought Peter expressed. He looked upon Jesus as his Savior, and it is immaterial whether he called Him the Holy One of God or the Son of the living God or any other term that would justify his meaning. Jesus was Peter's Savior because he had submitted himself to Him. This is the point. He is the Savior of all who submit themselves to Him. The dynamic of every religion is submission to a person and not to a creed. We submit ourselves to the care of a physician in whom we have confidence and learn many of the secrets of the medical profession. Abstract terms become concrete things. We are able to help the physician much in his ministrations. As we submit ourselves to Jesus, we learn His secrets, can foresee His purposes, discover His methods, help Him in the salvation of

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our souls. He becomes our Savior. We then believe because we know.

Our approach to God is through man and not through nature. We do not disparage nature. God is there. We find Him there, however, because we first found Him in ourselves and in our neighbors. The best man who can help us find God is Jesus of Nazareth. When we submit ourselves to Him entirely as Peter did, we exclaim with Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

## VI.

### GOD'S WAY NATURAL.

It was but a few hours' journey from Mount Carmel where Elijah, the prophet, so gloriously triumphed over the prophets of Baal, to the juniper tree where Elijah, the fugitive, sat disconsolate, mourning his lonely fate. "I, only I am left, and my life would they take."

God was with him on the hill; in the valley he is alone. On the mountain God revealed Himself in fire and wind and rain; in the desert the prophet is unable to discover any evidence that God is about. On the mountain God was ready to defend His own majesty and avenge the insult to His honor. In the valley He was not concerned about His prophet, He stretched not forth His hand to stay his pursuers or

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His strong arm to protect his life. So in the dolor of his soul and the delusion of his mind he pictured Jehovah as a God of the hills, but not of the valleys; a God who cared for His own interests and the on-going of His world, but who had no concern in the affairs of men and women; a God of fire and wind and thunder, but not a God whose manifestation was as quiet and gentle as a sprouting blade of grass. So Elijah mused and became more discouraged and lonely.

There were some lessons about God which he needed to learn under that juniper tree. The word of the Lord came to him, we are told, and he was commanded to go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the



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earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a still small voice. And Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle, for the Lord had revealed Himself. In a still small voice, gentle, but pronounced, the natural way in which a father would speak to his child and teach him his lesson, God spoke to Elijah, and his eyes were made to see and his soul to rejoice. He had been thinking otherwise about God, that God must reveal Himself in what we choose to call a supernatural way. Anything wonderful or spectacular would be of God; that which was perfectly natural and which could be understood as natural was not of God.

So a great many other people have thought. They have looked for Him only in signs and wonders. A drought or a hurricane, an eruption or an earthquake, a comet or a waterspout, was significantly portentous and indicated God's presence.

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Calamity at hand or calamity to come was a visitation of the Almighty and man must cower before Him. It was not realized that this view, so long held by the devout, outraged all rational thought of God. That it placed Him outside of His world like a king in his palace away from his subjects, to which he might return on occasion, as a king might enter one of his cities, with the blow of trumpet and the splendor of pageantry, and with all the indifference of one who was in supreme control. They did not realize that this view also did violence to God's intelligence, as though He could not make a world orderly in its ongoing; and further that it was a travesty of His love, for it indicated that He came into the world to punish His people.

This view was satisfactory only to people who did not think. To others, especially as the discoveries of science progressed, it became more and more untenable. So another view arose that went

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quite to the other extreme. Science began to say: Nothing is supernatural, all is natural. No God is necessary to explain the beginning or ongoing of this world. Somehow or other that which we call matter, the material substance which we can see and feel, got to going by a kind of attraction or interaction, that this movement became more and more regular and fixed as law, and the orderly process we can trace in nature emerged. Then men began to suggest that this interaction of material substances was not only the method by which the world moved, but that it was also the cause of the world's beginning, and that if we could only go back far enough we would be able to see how the world began independent of God. We do not understand these things they tell us because we are as yet not wise enough. As we grow wiser all will be clear. In the meantime it is well enough to attribute to God those things which can not be ex-

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plained by matter and motion. But as men become more and more enlightened God will be less and less necessary and some day science will conduct Him to the frontier of the universe and "bow Him out with thanks for His provisional services."

Here we have two views. The one looking at God only from the side of the supernatural gave us a God outside of His world with neither intelligence nor love, and the other looking at God from the purely naturalistic point of view gave us either exactly the same kind of God or no God at all. Exaggerated truth, in the long run, is just as depressing as half truth. Man's mind sooner or later revolts against both. So the error and the half-truth of these two views were harmonized. The clearest thinking of to-day gives us a God who is, was, and will be everywhere in the world and whose way of manifesting Himself is as natural as the air we breathe. The sci-

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entist has come to see that science can not account for the beginning of things, that its province is to study the material universe and the orderliness of its ongoing and tabulate results. That back of all matter and all law must be a Supreme Intelligence and a Supreme Will, and science leads us to the God in whom we live and move and have our being. On the other hand, the defenders of a God whose manifestation is purely supernatural have come to see that they have expressed but a half-truth, that God is to be found, not so much in the wind or the earthquake or the fire as in the orderly ongoing of the world; and that in this orderly ongoing the supreme love of the Almighty is manifest. His way, therefore, is the still small voice, the gentleness that makes man great. For He letteth the rain come down and the snow from heaven, which returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed



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to the sower and bread to the eater. The great miracle is not the rending of a mountain, but the quiet opening of the earth at a decillion of places where the grass, the flower, the grain may come through. The great miracle is not the storm that would shatter the trees, or the fire belching out of a mountain and covering a city, but the rain which falls from heaven and the sun which warms the earth and makes it fruitful. Not to denude the earth, but to replenish it and make it a fit habitation for man, this is God's way, the gracious purpose of His eternal love. When we reflect upon this purpose and upon this love we see how perfectly natural it is for God to be in His world, for it is the complete thought of His mind and the fullest expression of His activity. So when science brings us face to face with law and order, cause leading to effect, antecedent going before consequent, we do not become fearful and think we are going to be robbed

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of our God, but we rejoice. For the man of science has merely shown us God in a more wonderful way, has permitted us to see just a little more of His marvelous mind and of His will, which exhibit to us His love that is wider than the sea. And we exclaim with the psalmist, "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all, the earth is full of Thy riches."

As God's way in nature is to develop this earth for the good of man, so is it His way in history to develop man for His glory. In history as in nature we find God's way natural. Political upheavals and social cataclysms line the pages of civilization's march. But these are not according to His purpose nor due to His absence. They result from man's intervention, when he has undertaken to run God's world, and has thereby prevented His Spirit from being manifest. God was most clearly revealed to the ancient Is-

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raelites and most tangibly felt by them when they were serving Him and not the idols of heathen nations. God was in their history, we say. But He was not only in their history; He was in the history of the world before, and has been in the history of the world ever since. We read of their wars and think they were fighting all the time, and so forget that there were long periods of years when they were at peace and rest, when every man sat under his own vine and fig tree and could cultivate the arts of peace and learn God's way of progress.

Events of Bible times are not any more divine than the events of to-day. For God could be no more active and present in the time of the Israelites than He is present and active now. If we are ready to affirm that God was more intimately related to His people then than He is now, we affirm that He was in the world, but has left it or is only indifferent about it. So

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we put Him out of the world again and impugn His love. Even when it came to conflict the Divine Hand moved no nearer the human than it does to-day. God was in the wars of Saul and David, but no more so than in the wars which established our independence and maintained our Union. We believe that God led George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, but we can not believe they had any surer light from heaven than the head of our Nation can have now. Events of four thousand or four hundred or fifty years ago were extraordinary in a marked degree, and they seem more so to us. But they were as familiar every-day events to the men of those times as the Russian-Japanese war, for example, was to us just a few years ago. So familiar were they that doubtless many thought at the time God had nothing to do with them. So the events of to-day are so familiar to us that we are unable to see God in them. In five decades or

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five centuries the world will see, as we can not see now, how God's educating hand is stretched before us. Perhaps if we were not so matter-of-fact we could see God in His world even more now. If the Hebrew writers had written eighteenth or nineteenth century history as they wrote the history of their own time, they would have pictured God in this world far more than we do. And we should have such statements in our histories as the following: "And the Lord came unto Washington as he was sitting in his tent and said, Behold, the Hessians are rioting this night beyond the river. Get thee up, therefore, and cross over, for the Lord hath surely given them into thy hand. And Washington arose and did as he was bid, for he knew that it was the Lord which spoke." And as we follow the American army crossing the Delaware on that icy night with its meager equipment, are we following anything less miraculous than Joshua



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around the walls of Jericho or Gideon into battle with the Midianites? Was God fighting with Jonathan when he scaled the heights of Michmash, and not with Dewey when he sailed up Manila Bay? What would not a Hebrew writer, with all his imagery, have made of that Sunday's flight and pursuit at the entrance to Santiago Harbor twelve years ago? He would have seen God visible in the heavens and have heard His voice audible as in the days of Joab and Jehu and Hezekiah. It may seem strange to take these familiar events and compare them with those so-called sacred or divine events. But if we can believe in a God at all we must believe that He is present with us now as He was present then, even though we can not see His hand nor hear His voice. Would we have God suddenly appear in a flash of lightning and with a voice of thunder, take the reins of government in His hands and depose men as mere puppets? Of what

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possible use could this world be to Him then, and what significance could man have in His sight? Or would we have His Spirit working in the hearts of men and breathing abroad the divine wisdom, guiding man with intelligence and sympathy through a world prepared for him, so that evermore he could work out his own salvation and be in harmony with God's will?

Man makes mistakes, assemblies blunder, nations clash, but nevertheless the Spirit of God is manifest. It is more manifest now than it ever has been, and when it becomes completely, perfectly manifest, then will man and nation have done God's will on earth as it is done in heaven. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord."

A quiet, orderly, natural education of man, this is God's way in history. Results come slowly, and perhaps we may not see them, but that is not our concern. We see Him leading the rank and file

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across the centuries and we can trust Him to lead us still.

Just as God is present in nature and in history, so is He present in the human soul. And His way is still natural. Now and then He enters some soul and there is a mighty convulsion, as though the very deeps of that soul were disturbed and loosened from their foundation, and there is a cry as if the demons which possessed that soul were issuing forth, leaving it as one dead. A soul wholly abandoned to sin and shame needs to be thus torn before the Spirit of God can manifest itself. And that God can and does come thus into the human soul is evidenced by Harold Begbie's remarkable book on "Twice-Born Men." But that is not the way the Holy Spirit would work. His is the natural way. "Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven." God is in every human soul born into the world. He

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does not come in afterward. If we insist upon this we insist upon an absentee God who now and then not only must come into the world which He created to adjust it, but who must come into the human soul in an external way to give it enlightenment. God is in the human soul and by nurture and training He evermore possesses that soul. Religion, therefore, is not supernatural, imposed from without, but it is natural, developed from within. Men have tried to discover God in the human soul by cold calculation, but have failed. Many have associated Him with visible manifestations, with an outward witnessing of His Spirit, with a peculiar experience or sensation, but in all these outward signs the Lord is not to be found. They may accompany the new birth of a soul, but only because the Spirit of God is within. We discover Him in the soul when we seek to do right. Every right act accomplished puts us in accord with

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the system of righteousness by which this world and humanity are moved. In this system the dictates of a quickened conscience perfectly fit, and evermore are we closely associated with a "spiritual order, larger, higher, worthier" than ourselves. This spiritual world becomes real to us and our faith therein unshakable. There are voices without and within prompting to a better life. We begin to understand these voices, we hear the divine presence breathing in our souls. For, as President Hyde has said, "He who does right comes to see the good; and he who sees the good finds God and blessedness."

Every step in this religious experience is natural. It is simply the unfolding of the divine in man through his own instrumentality. It is God working in man to do and to will of His good pleasure to enable man to work out his own salvation. And God "works in" through the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit. These are



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the witnesses of God's presence. So, too, is there the natural unfolding of the divine in the child, who has not yet come to years of understanding, by the proper care and training of its parent. It is the religion of Jesus Christ. First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. But before the blade can begin to grow the divine seed must be sown, and this is God implanted in the human soul.

To see God in nature, in history, in the human soul, ever striving to work in a quiet and natural way, seeking to enlist the sympathy and co-operation of man—this is a vision that makes life worthy and honorable and sublime. It prompts us to see life in its true relation, and shows us the sacred trust committed to our care when as human souls we were placed in this world to become co-workers with the Divine Spirit.

## VII.

### THE BELIEFS OF UNBELIEF.

HEROD of old gives us a splendid starting point to meet the materialistic argument which would shut us off from an infinitely wise and loving Creator. The reports concerning Jesus had spread abroad so persistently that finally He was the object of conversation in Herod's throne-room. Some of the courtiers were saying that Jesus was Elias the prophet, others that He was a modern prophet like Amos or Isaiah or Jeremiah. When Herod heard thereof, he said, "It is the man John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead."

This statement, incidentally thrown into the narrative, arrests our attention, for it gives us an intimation as to how far an

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unbeliever will go in his belief. John the Baptist had passed out of life, he could not be interrogated nor examined; Jesus was standing in the multitude teaching and healing—every word and act could be ground fine in the crucible of proof. Yet Herod was readier to believe that a headless man had returned to life than examine on his own account the claims of a living one. Strange as this may seem, such vagaries and extravagances of unbelief are not confined to Herod's day. We find them among all ages and among all peoples. We are continually meeting with the beliefs of unbelief which put a far greater strain upon the human intellect than the beliefs of belief.

In the first place, we meet that ever-recurring statement that no personal intellect and hence no personal love is in and behind the phenomena of nature and the ongoing of the universe; that there is only a blind, unintelligent, unconscious working

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of material forces, which in some way got to going and through which the world, as we know it, is to be explained. In a word, there is no God,—only matter. The beliefs of the unbelievers in God and His creative power begin where all can stand; namely, we know nothing of that which was before the present state of things and that speculation about this former state is futile. The believer is content to say, “In the beginning God created.” The unbeliever, forgetting his assertion that speculation of the beginning of things is futile, claims—and I am quoting from the most noted of the present-day members of the materialistic school—that “we must make a start somewhere” and “are therefore compelled to posit a primordial, nebulous, non-luminous state,” in which the atoms and molecules of different sizes and unevenly distributed awakening by collision with each other began to rearrange themselves in such form that what seemed

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to be absolute likeness became unlike in character—an ape and a man, *e. g.*—what was shapeless became shapely, what simple more complex, till the highest complexity in the development of living matter was reached. What I have just quoted was not written as a jest, but was seriously set down in a professedly scientific work, and is accepted by many believers in the materialistic school. When we examine this statement, what have we? In the beginning, not God but atoms. Where these atoms originally came from no scientist has ever assumed to tell us. These atoms were in a “nebulous, non-luminous state.” They began moving toward and colliding with each other—who started the movement we are not told—and in this collision they were awakened; *i. e.*, a lifeless object by simply bumping up against another lifeless object became endowed with life. In this movement the atoms proceeded to rearrange and shape themselves,



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changing like into unlike, shapeless into shapely, simple into complex, until out of nothing plant and animal life, and finally man, was evolved.

This is the belief of unbelief; the belief of those who do not believe in a God of intelligence and creative force. If I should strew a platform with printer's type and say that the lifeless pieces of lead would come together and form themselves into an orderly and intelligent composition, we should have a statement similar to that of the materialistic scientist or philosopher who tells us that a lot of lifeless lumps got together and formed this earth with all its complexity of life. Or if I should set a child to playing with these types and say that it will so distribute them as to make intelligible reading, we should have a statement similar to that of the materialistic agnostic, who tells us that lifeless forms can take on order and meaning without the intervention of a conscious

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and knowing intelligence. It took a mind acute and alert to invent and perfect movable type, and it takes a mind keen and quick so to distribute them as to make intelligible reading matter. And it took a mind to create lifeless as well as living matter and a mind so to distribute and redistribute these that the highest and most complex form of human existence could result.

There are three insuperable difficulties that the materialistic evolutionist encounters. First, to declare that there is no God assumes a far greater degree of intelligence and knowledge than to assume that there is a God. For example, to adapt an illustration from another, suppose Robinson Crusoe on his island had wanted to assure himself that there was no other human being on that island. It would have been necessary for him to explore every nook and cranny of the island and familiarize himself thoroughly with it, and

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even after he had acquired this knowledge he could not have rested content, because he could not have known whether after he had explored the east side of the island, *e. g.*, and then gone to the west side, or vice versa, somebody had not landed. In other words, in order for him to be certain that there was no one else on the island he would have had to have a super-human knowledge which would have acquainted him with every part of the island at every moment of time. And yet, how did he learn that the island was or had been inhabited? By a single footprint in the sand. So when we undertake to say there is no God in this universe we are undertaking to say only what an infinite and omniscient mind could know. Whereas, on the other hand, the simplest blade of grass makes God's presence known.

Lord Kelvin, recognized as one of the greatest leaders of physical science, says:

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“Scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power. Forty years ago I asked Liebig, walking somewhere in the country, if he believed that the grass and the flowers which he saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, ‘No, no more than I could believe that the books of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces.’ Every action of human free will is a miracle to physical and chemical and mathematical science.”

Secondly, if we assume that there is no intelligent mind back of creation we are making this non-intelligent substance more intelligent than the highest intelligence of man. For example, in our modern laboratories our chemists are able to make imitation garnets and even small diamonds which deceive all but the expert lapidarist. No one would deny that great skill and knowledge on the part of these chemists are required to produce these results, that

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a governing mind of the highest capacity is present and active in every stage of the process. Place one of these "paste" diamonds beside a large stone of clearest water, mined out of Mother Earth. Must there be an intelligence behind a paste diamond and none behind a Koh-i-noor? Is the inferior product the result of many years of patient study and wearisome work, the superior stone the result of mere chance? Herod, in his belief that a headless man was speaking the words and doing the deeds of Jesus, is out-Heroded in the belief of intelligent men who ask us to believe with them, that there is no mind back of our minds, that we are here through mere chance, and that this world is the result of a collision among lifeless particles that came from nobody knows where.

The third difficulty is that he who says there is no infinite and supreme mind back of all natural phenomena can not get along



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in his argument without making room for such a mind. If there were no God, man would have to create Him in order to explain his own power of mind and will. So the agnostic, who denies the existence of a personal God on one hand, must substitute the equivalent of such a God on the other. He speaks of an "idea" or a "blind will," or a "sublimated unconsciousness," or a "moral order," or the "eternal not ourselves." But when we analyze the terms we find each one of them implies the very thing the agnostic and materialist would deny, *i. e.*, personality. And as soon as we admit that there is a personality back of the phenomena of this world we put ourselves logically in the same place with the Hebrew who wrote, "In the beginning God." And we can quote the most eminent advocates of this very theory against themselves. Darwin wrote that the more he studied nature the more was he "impressed with the conclusion that the

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contrivances and beautiful adaptations” of nature “transcend in an incomparable degree the contrivances and adaptations which the most fertile imagination of the most imaginative man could suggest with unlimited time at his disposal.” Huxley, in his famous illustration of a tadpole developing in his slimy cradle, said: “After watching the process hour by hour, one is almost involuntarily possessed by the notion that some more subtle aid to vision than an achromatic object glass would show the *hidden artist*<sup>1</sup> with his plan before him, striving with skillful manipulation to perfect his work.” And at another time, speaking of the wonders of crystallography, he said there were “whole squadrons of molecules under a governing eye [whose governing eye?] arranging themselves in battalions, gathering around distinct centers” until the perfect crystal was formed. “Here there is an architect

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<sup>1</sup> The italics are not in the original.

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at work who makes no chips, no din; one who is building the particles into perfect and beautiful crystals." And Herbert Spencer, in his last message to the reading public, indirectly affirmed that the simple faith in a God supreme and over all transcended rationalistic arguments as to His non-existence.

Here, then, is where the belief of unbelief brings us. The scientist who denies the existence of God—and there is at least one prominent scholar left who does—and declares there can be neither mind nor will back of nature's phenomena, still must admit that "the plant and the animal seem to be controlled by a definite design in the combination of their several parts, just as clearly as we see in the machines which man invents and constructs." A machine, the least marvelous of all the wonders about us, needs an intelligent mind to invent and a skillful hand to construct, and the flower or the animal, which is more

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marvelous, seems to be the product of a definite design. But man, the most wonderful phenomenon in existence, is the result of mere chance, a chemical ferment, an albuminous compound, a little path of protoplasm, as destitute of either will or responsibility as an effervescent powder. Far more easy is it to accept the most child-like belief in God's wisdom and love and in man's freedom and responsibility.

Another cardinal belief of unbelief is that Christianity did not have a supernatural beginning. Jesus was a great Prophet and Leader, but nevertheless only a man.

When we begin to ask ourselves what Christian civilization stands for we sum up all that is righteous and holy and beneficent. Below the foundations of the hospital and asylum, the school and the Church, is the spirit of Christianity. And this is true in an increasing degree. In the last century a book appeared in Ger-

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many that startled all Europe, and the claim was made that the death-knell of Christianity had been sounded. This book was Strauss' "Life of Jesus." Hard on its heels came the work of Renan, and soon everywhere on the Continent, and finally in England, the spirit of secularism and atheism was running strong and high to the disparagement and overthrow of Christianity. What was the result? As the spray on the crest of an ocean wave is dissipated in the sunlight, so was this froth and fume of an irreverent and unknowing criticism on Christianity turned to nothing by the life and light of the pulsating and illuminating spirit of Jesus Christ. And to-day, while we are far below the level, we are more active than ever in making His ideal the controlling one in human affairs. While we make all allowances for difference among Christian Churches and sects, there is to-day more devotion and influence in the world that



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must be accounted Christian than ever before, while all kinds of Christian workers are more numerous and energetic than ever. Missionary operations alone evidence a degree of disinterested zeal never before equaled in the whole course of human history. The spirit of Christianity is more dominant in the world to-day than it ever was. If Jesus Christ was a mere man, then it is harder to believe that out of such a limited life so stupendous a product as modern civilization could have grown, than to believe that He was more than man—Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

Turn from the conquests of Christianity in the eighteenth and nineteenth and the first few years of the present century to the first century and see there the conflict and victory presented. If we should imagine, to adapt another illustration, a lion and a tiger and a wolf uniting in a desperate effort to destroy a lamb and

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failing in the attempt, we should have a fair parallel of what actually happened in the first century. Christianity, as a weak and trembling lamb, was thrown into the very midst of the wolf of Jewish hate and the lion of Greek subtlety and the tiger of Roman might. All the vitality and tenacity and fanaticism of three old and established nations, two in their turn having been world powers and the other then enjoying that supremacy, were thrown against this weak but intrepid spirit of true religion. Jew and Greek and Roman were thrown aside as the hay and stubble which they were. Here is a fact that can not be denied and needs to be explained. What is the explanation of Gibbon, *e. g.*, the bold antagonist of the supernatural origin of Christianity? First, because the early Christians were devoted to their cause, and second, because of the power of Constantine. What was the cause of the early Christians and what made them devoted

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to it, and what gave Constantine his power? Simply and purely the faith of the early disciples in Jesus Christ—a faith that they did not generate themselves, but which was generated and inspired by the living God through His Messenger on earth, Jesus. As the materialistic unbeliever can not account for this world without God, so neither can the unbeliever in the supernatural origin of Christianity account for the rise and spread of Christianity except on the assumption that Jesus was more than a mere man.

If Christ was an impostor, His mark remains upon history and must be accounted for. Whatever be the theory of the origin of Jesus Christ and the creed that bears His name, He remains the greatest fact in history. “The simple record of three short years of Christ’s active life,” says Lecky, “has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers or the exhortations of

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moralists." It is far more difficult to believe that an "impostor" could more profoundly affect the human race than all the great figures of history put together, than to believe with Peter and James and John that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. And it is far more difficult to believe that any one, especially those unlettered Galilean fishermen, could have invented the sayings of Jesus or imagined such a pure and lofty life as the Gospels present, than to believe that Jesus lived and loved and that His disciples recorded His words and their memory of Him in the simple but essentially correct narratives of the Gospel writers. "It takes a Christ to invent a Christ. To ask us to believe that some nameless and forgotten impostor invented the character and story of Jesus Christ, preached the Sermon on the Mount, imagined all His parables, forged His ethics, conceived in His name the parable of the Prodigal Son, and of

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the Good Samaritan, and yet was Himself throughout the whole process a conscious and conscienceless impostor—this is the wildest flight of mere unreason.” It out-Herods Herod’s belief of unbelief.



## VIII.

### GOD RESTING.

God was active in His creation until He brought forth man. Then He rested. This is the simple account of Genesis. We may take this account as an utterance of childhood, beautiful in its suggestiveness to be sure, but of no deeper significance. Many have discarded the opening verses of the Bible because they find them in conflict with latter-day science. But they would have no value for them even as poetic imagery. Now this is the superficial view of the Bible which many men who ought to know better take. The really thoughtful man to-day does not look to the Bible for scientific presentation or historical narrative. As an authority in these fields the Book has lost the prominence it had

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years ago. But the loss is only in the seeming, for the Bible never presumed to be an authority in these matters. And we welcome this seeming loss, because it means a great gain. The Bible has been restored to its rightful place, the place of the deepest, the truest, the most perfect interpretation of the fundamental problems of life. We may know a thing better than we are able to explain. We may have conceptions which outrun actual knowledge. And our attempt to put our ideas in forms for others to understand will never be as successful as we would desire because we are dependent upon the imperfect medium of language to convey our thought. This is more true in reference to the writers of Genesis than it is to us. Our knowledge enables us to state our facts with more preciseness. But it is a grave question as to whether we can express our thoughts, those deep, underlying facts of our existence, with the suggestiveness they

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did, the suggestiveness which carries even the last vestige of their meaning to the careful and sympathetic reader to-day.

So when we read that God rested after man had been created, and not before, we do not think so much of a physical creation, and not at all of a God working around in the world as a contractor might be busy with a house until it was ready for tenancy; we think of the importance of man, of his place in the universe, of his relation to the Almighty, that in the mind of the Biblical writer there could be no break in the work of creation, no rest from its arduous labors, until man appeared. Because God, as it were, waited for man to come, do we have a flood of light thrown not only upon the importance and nature of man, but also upon the nature, yes, and the needs, of God.

There are some who would have us believe that our world is the result of a blindly working series of inanimate forces.

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That behind the world as we see it is not mind, but matter, and that the orderly ongoing of the world is not due to a guiding intelligence, but to a reign of law. The wind will turn a windmill and a stream of water will make the water-wheel revolve. Back of the wind and back of the water is a force under the control of law, and this force will operate according to certain laws of the universe in spite of every opinion or opposition to the contrary. We need not go far to find the reign of law and to conclude that certain things are simply because they are. But why should we be asked to believe that behind these laws there is no intelligent personality giving expression to Himself in orderly procedure? When we look at the water-wheel turning in willing response to the impulse of the mountain stream we may have in mind the law of gravitation and the power of natural forces. But as we really consider the water-wheel we

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think of a mind that conceived it and of human hands which constructed it. As it turns, our thought is led on further to the purpose for which it was made to turn, and we see men at work in sawmills or at looms. And the last thought of the power resident in the water and the law of gravitation is of the man, the personality, the living, breathing being who has a mind to conceive and a hand to carry out.

Now, if the power, the possibilities of a stream of water lead us on irresistibly to a personality for whose use evidently the water stream and the law of falling bodies were brought into existence, ought our minds not also be led back to another Personality bringing life out of death, order out of chaos, light out of darkness? If we do not so believe, then we must declare that lifeless matter, which has come from nobody knows where, can issue in living forms under a process of law which no



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intelligence has conceived or made operative. In simple words, we must insist that from nothing something can come. It is not sufficient, therefore, to say that when we speak of God we mean a force or energy which is forever at work and brings to pass all the phenomena of the world as we know them. Human striving after reality demands something more. It demands a personality as well as a force, a mind as well as a law, a will as well as an orderly ongoing. And so when we are told that God was active until man was created, we have what the human heart demands, a personal God. For man, thinking, willing, doing, with powers and capacities seemingly commensurate with dominion over the natural world, is inconceivable, is nonsense, without a God thinking, willing, doing, with infinite powers, eternal capacities. The personality of man can be explained only in the personality of God. In the very dawn of the

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Hebrew consciousness this stupendous truth is grasped. And it means more rather than less to us because it was set forth in words of poetry. For the poet touches the deep springs of life as the prose writer never can. His imagery makes us forget the weary road of logic and enables us to leap with Him into the very center of divine truth. To the fact of the personality of God we have, also in poetry, the completing truth—the love and care of a Heavenly Father:

Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,  
Back of the flour the mill;  
Back of the mill is the wheat and the shower  
And the sun and the Father's will.

But personality implies communion. Man can not live alone. He needs companionship. And in seeking his companions he draws on the deepest resources and susceptibilities of his inner life. He would not only have true companions, he must have congenial companions, men and

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women who can inspire, uplift, ennoble him. The deep in his soul must be answered by the deeps in the souls of others. Else he is alone on an uninhabited and untillable island. Man finds the companionship he seeks, he makes friends and can commune with them. He can interchange his thoughts and his feelings with their thoughts and feelings. The truer the friend, however, the more inspiring the intercourse, the more irresistible is the mind, the heart drawn to a higher, a deeper communion, the soul of man would speak with the soul of God. Again we turn to the Hebrew Scriptures for the truest expression of this longing: "As the hart panteth after the water brook so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none on earth beside Thee."

When we think of God, the Supreme Personal Being, lending Himself to such approaches by man, He comes near to His

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world. Transcendent He is as we see His presence on every mountain-top, in every valley, abroad on the ocean, shining in the skies, painting the lilies, coloring the sea-shells, silvering the moon and the stars. But indwelling is He also, the very life of the flower, the light of the sun, the energy of the soul. Man can commune with Him, for closer is He than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. In Him man finds satisfaction of his need for the communal life; his spiritual life is deepened, his soul's longing intensified, as he approaches the Father; the fluttering heart is stilled, the heaving breast is quieted, fears are calmed, sorrows are driven away, the heavy loads of daily life lightened. No wonder Jesus said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." For His rest was in communion with the Father.

Communing with God, we learn also how to commune with man. We understand the

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essentials, we learn to know each other, we can even dispense with oral expressions of our thoughts, and learn what the other is thinking about because we have so intimately related ourselves to Him in communion. Hearts beat in unison, lives center in the same purposes and needs, wills are directed to the furthering of the same ends because souls answer to souls as they answer to the Infinite Soul. Blind eyes are opened, palsied feet grow firm, trembling hands are steadied, faltering lips are emboldened as the life flows from the soul of the Eternal into the souls of waiting men and women.

Communion with an ever-living, ever-present God and Father—this is why the Creator was active in His creation until man was brought forth. But communion implies revelation. Here is another evidence, not only of the personality of God, but of the purpose He had in creating man. The greatest joy we have is in tell-



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ing another some good thing, and if that good thing will work to his benefit our joy is unbounded. A light brighter than even the heavenly lights, as they sparkle with such transcendent brilliance, shines in the eyes of many a man and woman as he or she gives to make another happy. We have been recipients of such beneficence, and our hearts have leaped and bounded as we realized the love which prompted the giving. We have cared more for the giver than for the gift. For that other has revealed himself or herself to us and we have understood. So God reveals Himself to His creatures and they understand. In His presence is fullness of joy, at His right hand are pleasures for evermore. But it is not these so much which we covet and from which we benefit. It is the revelation we have of God, the glimpse we have of His Father-soul, as He opens up to us His heart and shows us His love.

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Then, too, we can understand and appreciate the teaching, the learning of one who is wiser, more experienced than we if we are in intimate fellowship and communion with him. The lessons that are best learned, the impressions that are most lasting and influencing are those the child receives at his mother's knee. A lasting blessing comes to childhood, and later man and womanhood, from the mother who is wise as well as loving, firm as well as kind, who can give what is best and truest of her mother-heart to her inquiring and trusting child. So God, who is infinite love, all-comprehending experience, teaches us our lessons, leads us into the way, the truth, the life. We learn of Him because we have communed with Him so closely, because we wait so constantly before Him. We continue in His life, we come to know His truth, and it is His truth alone that makes us free.

Again, we are reprovèd most effectually

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by the one who loves us most and whom we love most. He knows us most intimately, we care greatly for his good opinion of us. His very presence is a revealing source of what we ought to be and do. We would not have his outer disapproval of our acts, and far less would we have his inner, unexpressed displeasure. Everything that is good in him appeals to us. How much more so does the ever-loving Father reveal to us our weakness, put us on our guard, and by prompting us to show and do our best and truest, impart to us the strength to accomplish right ends and effectualize pure motives. He reveals Himself to us by the very power of His love, that power of love which we experience when we commune with Him. As we receive this revelation all other revelations are added unto us. As leaven is an energy which leavens the whole lump, so is the revelation of God which comes to us as we partake of His love and re-

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spond to it, the potentializing power which holds the solution of this world's and our life's problems. And as we become conscious of this power we can wait for the unfolding of the mysteries as the leafless tree can wait for the springtime and the stalk of grain for the autumn.

To let man commune with God so that God could reveal Himself to man, this is the truth that was glimpsed in the day-dawn of Hebrew aspiration when the writer unfolds to us the fact that the Creator was active in His creation until man, a responsive soul, appeared. For this reason God exalted man and raised him above every living creature, giving him capacities to conquer himself and hold in his hands the guiding and restraining reins of nature.

But there is a concluding thought about God resting. Using the naive language of the narrative: God was active in His creation, working with might and main, bring-

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ing a world into existence fit for man's habitation and development. When this was finished and man had not only been created, but given dominion over the world, then God, satisfied with His work—that it was good—rested from all His work which He had made. Notice, He first blesses man, the male and the female which He had created, and then He says, “Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and *subdue* it, and have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” As though He should have said: I have made the earth and all that is in it for you; I now give it to you, take it; My labors have ended, yours have begun. A father builds up a magnificent business, and at an age when he should retire, he calls his sons who have been active with him some years and says to them, This is now your business; conduct it. This very inadequate, and yet, perhaps, startling illustration makes the thought of the



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writer clear and gives us his idea of the presence and activity of God in His world. We need not go far underneath to find the fundamental truth. God can make a world for man, give him all the possibilities and opportunities to possess and enjoy that world. But man himself must realize it, he must make his own world, he must take what is given him, manage it and bring it under subjection, and in the process develop his own powers and hidden resources. The father retires from his business, giving it over to his boys, but he is still present; he is there to advise, to suggest, and even although he travels into a far country, his spirit remains behind. Again and again this controls the actions of the sons; what would father do in this case? they will ask; what did he actually do in such matters? And the inspiration and the guiding principle will be present and active. So God, although He

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laid down the actual work which is for man to do when man came into existence, still is present, His Spirit is all-pervasive, His counsels can be known by communing with Him.

Or to take, perhaps, a better illustration. A father shows his boy how to do a certain thing. He takes him so far in the process, as far as he thinks necessary. Then he says, Now you go on and learn how to finish it. By and by the boy comes and says, "I can not go on, I do not know how to do this or that part of it." The father takes the matter in hand; if the boy really can not proceed alone, he instructs him further; but if he can, he says, "You are able; work it out yourself." So God takes us step by step. He is resting from all labors which we can and must do; all power is given into our hands. But if we really can not proceed, if we really are not able to subdue and conquer, then He bends

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His ear and lends His hands as we come to Him, and is a very present help in time of actual need.

Now, this is the principle according to which God has been ruled from the beginning. In a real sense, He has rested from all the work which He has made. He has given the world to man and has expected him to subdue it. And man has responded to his task. The histories of civilization and of intellectual development read like miraculous accounts when they show how man has been superior to his surroundings, has controlled the laws of nature, adapting himself to extremes of cold and heat, bringing the unyielding ground to fertility, moving by the power of faith over and through impassable mountains, until climate and soil and all untoward elements were under subjection. The continent of Europe, which can be called a fruitful garden to-day, would have remained a morass, a waste, a dark continent intellectually and

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morally, had it not been for the faith and the force resident in man to make it fertile for physical and spiritual life. And what would this land of ours be to-day had not the Pilgrim Fathers subdued it? The physical world, the mental, the moral, the spiritual world is only a potentiality for us; we must realize it and make it our own. Go in and possess it, comes the Scriptural command, for ye are well able to. We may be sure God will not do our work for us.

So God rests as He waits for us to labor to bring forth the harvest which He has made possible. He would have us come into our own. He would have us develop as we subdue the untamed in us, as we work out our destinies, as we finish the work which He has given us to do. But how inertly we respond to the task, how indifferently we receive the inheritance, how stubbornly we refuse to be guided by His Spirit, how often we waste our sub-

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stance and come to grief! God waits for the manifestation of His sons, and so patiently is He waiting for them that all nature groaneth and travaileth for the sons of God to show themselves worthy of the love and confidence of the Father. In man alone could God see His likeness, with man alone could God commune, to man alone could God reveal Himself. Now He waits for man's response.



## IX.

### THE DIALOGUE WITH GOD.

THE dialogue of the boy Samuel with the Lord is one of the most tender touches in the Old Testament. We are impressed with grandeur and awe as we hear Jehovah on Sinai thundering out His laws to Moses; a sense of commiseration comes over us as we hear Elijah in the desert telling God of his sorry plight; with Jeremiah we are tempted to wail and lament as he brings his grievances to God, who seems to have abandoned Israel. But with the child Samuel, in the dead of night, lying near the ark of the Lord in the dim light of the temple lamp, we are in sympathetic accord and are moved by the simplicity and trusting faith of the young lad. Three

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times we see him roused from deep slumber by a strange sound, and listening intently, thinking his aged master, Eli, has called, run obediently to him saying, "Here I am," ready to minister unto him. And three times he runs back to his cot. Awakened a fourth time, he hastens again to Eli, and is told that the Lord is speaking and he should listen. Then he answers, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

It was an important word he was to hear. Eli, the priest at the temple of the Lord, had grown old indulging his two wayward sons in their every wish and giving over to them unrightly his priestly functions, until the temple service was thoroughly debauched and the worship of God profaned. The moment had come when the priest was to be deposed and the sons punished. So the inspired writer takes this naïve but effective method of showing how the wrath of a just God must be visited upon a sinning people. It has

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a religious value for us that is well worth considering. Like all religious language, it is poetical and imaginative. We find that the earliest writers of Hebrew literature were content to state their facts with little or no religious coloring, but that those writing three or four centuries later, after or during those great periods of religious intensity that so mark the development of the Israelitish people, were deeply imbued with the religious and spiritual sense of all outward phenomena and historical fact. So they spoke the inspired language of God's poets and made the deep truths of God known.

Tennyson tells us to speak to God, for closer is He to us than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. We do speak to Him, but not as though He were physically present in form and voice as a mere man. God speaks to us and tells us that our sin will be punished and our goodness rewarded, but not with the audible voice

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of human speech. God is Spirit and in spirit He reveals Himself to His children. Thus He talks with us, and thus He talked with Moses and Samuel and Isaiah. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. If we should insist, therefore, that God came in times of old and spoke to men with an audible voice we should have to insist that God must speak to us in an audible voice to-day, and as He does not so speak to us, we then should be forced to conclude that God is less near to His world and His children than He was in times past, that He has left this world and His children to their fate.

This is not the method or the will of a God who changeth not, who is near to every one of His creatures. He spoke to Samuel just as surely as our friend speaks to us, but it was in the language of that day. He spoke just as truly to Paul, but it was

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in the language of that day. He spoke to Savonarola and Luther and Huss and Wickliffe and Wesley and Phillips Brooks, but it was in the language of the days in which these men lived. Had He not used the language of their day, these men could not have understood Him, and could they have understood Him, they could not have made His word known to their fellow-men without speaking in the language of their day. So the God and Father of the human soul speaks to each generation in the language of that generation, and the listening soul hears and understands. It need only to say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." "There is no speech or language where His voice is not heard, His line is gone out through all the earth and His words unto the end of the world." God's language must be a universal language, for while there are divers languages and tongues in the earth, most of His children speak and understand only one



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tongue. If He were thus hampered, how would the people across the seas and in the uttermost part of the earth hear Him? The English missionary sails to the savage islanders, and for days is in danger of being torn to pieces, but God is speaking through him and the cannibals soon understand His words. It is a language of gentleness and fortitude, of kindness and bravery, of self-sacrifice and love. It is God's language and is soon translated into the human speech of those benighted people. They hear it, they read it, they understand it.

God speaks and has ever spoken His varied language. The first man, talking with Him about his disobedience in the Garden of Eden story, heard Him. The sin-crushed soul pleading this moment for relief hears and is heard by the Almighty. We have God pictured as walking in the cool of the evening in the Garden of Eden and searching out and speaking to the man

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who has disobeyed His commands and is hiding from Him, and are apt to feel that this is the only way God can approach and speak to us. We have never seen or heard Him in this manner, and conclude that God is as far away from us as the farthest star in space. Because we would see Him in person and hear Him audibly, do we so often cry out bitterly with Carlyle, "If God would only speak again in these days as He has spoken in other days." Yet the voice of God is not silent to-day. He only does not hear Him who has not come into His presence and said, "Speak, Lord, for Thy *servant* heareth." Those living several miles from the ferry landing in a Western city can distinctly hear the whistles of the boats as they sound every half-hour on leaving, while those engaged in daily pursuits in the heart of the city, only a few blocks from the ferries, seldom hear the whistles. They blow just the same, but in the noise and bustle of

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the streets their sound is completely deadened. So we can hear the voice of God coming out of the stillness of the past, but fail to hear it in the turmoil and confusion of the present. It was in the cool of the evening hour when God spoke to the man in the Garden about his disobedience, and to Abraham concerning the destruction of Sodom; it was in the solitude of the wilderness that He spoke to Moses at the burning bush, and to Elijah under the juniper tree; it was in the stillness of night that He spoke to Jacob at Beth-el, the "House of God," and to Samuel in the sanctuary of his Lord. These sons of God were ready to listen, and therefore they heard. The waiting soul to-day, ministering unto the Lord, as Samuel did, will hear His voice.

Man is religious. How he came to be, why he is so, are questions we can not definitely answer. The fact remains that the essential element of man's nature is

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religious. Religion implies dependence. As a religious being man is forever striving to put his life in harmony with the power on which he is dependent. The only means of approach he has to this power is that of petition. In ordinary life we are continually dependent upon others. When we stop to consider, it is surprising how little we can do without petitioning our friends and neighbors for assistance. We may do this openly and grossly careless of the proprieties, and be classed as mere beggars. But even when we have maintained our dignity and worth we remain dependent upon others, and at least tacitly crave their help. We need the friendship, the love, the sympathetic companionship of others. This we silently ask for. Often do we need the material help, advice, suggestion, consolation, encouragement which we can get only from our friends and loved ones. We do not ask openly and supinely, we simply pray for it

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in our actions toward those whom we can trust.

Herein lies the difference between begging and prayer. The beggar habitually asks, not intending to give anything in return; the prayerful heart is ready to give even more than it can receive, and therefore the prayer is answered. Shakespeare says:

We do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach  
us all to render  
The deeds of mercy.

This is the true definition of prayer. Putting ourselves in thorough sympathy with our friends, subjecting ourselves to them, entreating them for their help because we have made ourselves worthy of it, and to share with others even more than our friends can give. Praying for mercy, but rendering the deeds of mercy. This is what prayer in the religious sense must be: to enter into spiritual communion with



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God, to be His minister, His servant, ready to listen when He speaks. Emerson says: "You need not speak to me, I need not go where you are, that you should exert magnetism on me. Be you only whole and sufficient, and I shall feel you in every part of my life and fortune, and I can as easily dodge the gravitation of the globe as escape your influence." If this is true of man, who is never whole and sufficient, but who can worthily influence us even although we have never seen nor heard him, how much more is this true of God, who is perfectly whole and sufficient and who for evermore has made Himself felt in every part of the life and fortune of sainted men and women and whom we can no more escape than the law of gravitation.

A keenly spiritualized French writer speaks of prayer as the commerce between God and man. Commerce means exchange, exchange of goods, merchandise, property

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of any kind. Commerce with God just as truly means exchange; taking the God-life in our life and giving ourselves to God. Our commerce with God is a relationship which lasts through all our vicissitudes and conditions, both of life and death. Unlike the commerce with man, where our profit may be small and uncertain, our commerce with God means nothing but gain to ourselves and in such a measure as to make us lack nothing.

In his holy and pure moments man hears the voice of God, soothing and reassuring. In his sinful moments also he hears God's voice. The difference is that in the one case he welcomes God's voice and is glad to hear it; His Word is true from the beginning, a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path. In the other case he would rather not hear God speak. As the disobedient Israelites said to Moses, "Speak thou with us and we will hear; but let not God speak

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with us lest we die;” so would man whose sins are uncovered rather not hear the voice of the Almighty. But God speaks even to the man who has lost the right way and is selling his soul in Vanity Fair. Among those who have defective hearing are many whose eardrums are thickened, who can not hear ordinary speech, but, strange to say, can understand what is said in a noisy place. The unusual concussion of the noises makes their eardrums vibrate as they do not in normal conditions. There are men who are deaf to the ordinary calls of life and duty, who will respond only to the thunders of threatening. So God speaks to them. In the lightning’s flash and the thunder’s roar He appeared on Sinai, and the disobedient children of Israel down in the valley heard His voice and quailed before Him. It was as the judgment day for them, and they hastened to hear His word.

This is not the way God would speak.

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He would have His children hear Him normally. He would have their soul's ears so naturally keyed to His spiritual utterance that every one of them would instinctively hear. He would rather not come with the loudly crashing voice of calamity, forcing His children to hear and turn to Him. He would have His children ever in His presence, where it would be as natural for them to say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," as it would be to breathe or love. His children hear His voice, He calleth His own by name, for they know His voice.

If we would converse with God, carry on a dialogue with Him, we must put away all our presuppositions that He is far from us and not to be known, and go to Him, dwell in His courts, as the child Samuel did, believing that He is in our very souls. Willingness to hear and readiness to obey: these are the two conditions on which man's relation to God must depend. We

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worship God ignorantly when we assume that He is far from us and not ready to speak with us face to face. We worship Him in spirit and in truth when He enters into and quickens our innermost being, when we turn to Him and say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."



## X.

### ON HOLY GROUND.

THE Jews were in the habit of looking for the sacred in the secular. They expected manifestations of God anywhere and everywhere. They walked softly and in awe, as though they were in the immediate presence of the Almighty. No wonder, then, that they saw and appreciated many of the deep and hidden things of life which people who come after neither saw nor sensed. No wonder that they threw such sanctity around the name of God that it was profanity even to speak His name. No wonder that they saw Him in the burning hedge and that every wayside bush was aflame with His presence. For He was near to them, and they were never surprised when He seemed to come to them

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in the form of some visitant and spoke audibly with them. They recognized that He was good and they looked to Him for every beneficence. They also believed that He was terrible, and in their primitive way of thinking, expected immediate death to follow an actual vision of God. So He came to them in the form of angels. No one could see the face of God and live. Even Isaiah in his remarkable experience in the temple cried that he was undone because his eyes had seen the Lord.

And yet this aspect of terribleness which the children of Israel predicated of God is only another evidence of how truly and deeply they understood Him, and how clearly and incisively they were able to express their views of Him. As we think of God there is a sense in which He does seem terrible. We are not surprised to hear one of the psalmists saying that God is terrible in His doing toward the children of men, and that "Men should praise His

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terrible name and say unto Him, How terrible Thou art!" It was a fearful thing in their eyes to fall into the hands of the living God. And yet this expression of fear is but an appreciation of the sacredness of God and of the sanctity of His presence. If these are outraged, how else can God be but terrible? And if He is defied, how can it be otherwise than that death must follow? For God in the very essence of His nature is unapproachable by man. The sun bathes this earth in light and fills it with life, but man who persists in looking into the face of the sun is in danger of becoming blind. The sun says in effect, Shade your eyes when you would look at me, for you dare not look too closely. So there is the holy of holies into which even man in the high priesthood of his best self dare not enter. Draw not nigh hither, and even where thou standest remove thy shoes, for the place is holy.

God calls attention to the sanctity of

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His Being, which we profane only at our peril. His teaching in this regard we can understand if we will but open our eyes. We have been breasting ourselves in recent years because of the way we are controlling natural resources. We talk in stock phrases about harnessing Niagara, and chaining the lightning, and bridging the ocean by steam. Our achievements in inventive skill and mechanical progress read like fairy tales. We are swung over the sea of ice that eternally covers the slopes of the Jungfrau, for example, and believe, although our eyes are not yet able to see, that a tunnel will soon pierce to the heart of this mountain and an elevator lift the sightseer to the very tip of the snow-clad summit. But every now and then, as the result of accident, a warning comes to draw not nigh thither, that the ground is sacred only for the tread of the Almighty. We have been sailing through the air lately with such security and at so

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rapid a pace as to become somewhat indifferent to the fact that only an intangible ether and not the solid earth is immediately below us. But ever and anon the warning comes terribly, yes, death-dealingly, that the precincts of the air are too sacred as yet for the vulgar trespass of man.

The Grand Canyon of the Colorado may be nothing more than a mere name to many. But there is nothing like unto it upon the whole known earth. The psalmist speaks of the tree planted by the river of water which bringeth forth its fruit in due season. But here in this great canyon, which is so long and so wide and so deep that no description can give even a faint idea of its stupendousness and wholly unlikeness to any other wonderful feature of nature, flows a river which baffles every approach of man and refuses every aid to cultivation. Instead of making the soil about it fertile, it draws all the moisture out of the



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land for miles around. A man perishing with thirst may stand on the rim of the canyon and see rivers of water flowing past him, and yet die for any drop which he could procure of it. Every expedition which has been made to follow its course and explore the recesses of the canyon has resulted in death and dismay. If anywhere in nature there is a spot where the Almighty says, "Draw not nigh hither," it is here. As we rode down more than five thousand feet over the steep and narrow trails seven miles to the river, or sat on the plateau two thousand feet sheer down to the water's edge, or stood upon the rim of the canyon and looked upon a scene which man's eyes can see nowhere else, I seemed to be hearing again and again the voice saying, "Take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground on which thou standest is holy ground." God was speaking, and man would be deaf indeed did he not heed His voice. He is terrible

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here. But in this very terribleness we see the beauty of His nature and the tenderness of His love. The smith can strike a powerful blow upon the anvil. But that arm never seems so strong as when it enfolds the helpless and trusting child. As the blow is struck the father says, in effect, "Draw not nigh hither, this is no place for you; here I must show my power and do my work." So the arm of God is terrible as it lifts up the mountains and hollows out the valleys. But all the strength that goes into these titanic labors is present as He encircles His children and draws them to His Father-heart. Man is mighty in his powers to subdue the earth, but God is mightier in creating and upholding it. And He still maintains possession over vast domains which as yet are too holy for man's profane foot. He holds us at a proper distance and keeps us humble and reverent. When we consider His heavens, therefore, the work of His fingers; the

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moon and the stars which He has ordained, "What is man," we cry, "that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?"

As in nature, so in the deeper things of life there is a sanctity we must observe. Here are those intimate personal relations which go to the very soul of our being. Would we analyze friendship? Would we ask why we love each other? If we would, and insisted upon doing so, we would destroy the fragrance of the flower, as the botanist might do in pulling it to pieces, but, unlike the botanist, we would know no more about the flower. For love is unanalyzable. As soon as we draw near to scrutinize it we hear the unmistakable voice, "Draw not nigh hither; take thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground on which thou standest is holy." Here we are in the domain of the sacred. If we are ruthless and push our quest, we profane the holiest of our instincts and sus-

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ceptibilities and do not add to our knowledge; if we are reverent and wait with bowed heads in the holy place, we are soon aware of a pervading presence which wonderfully glorifies our vision, and we begin to feel on understanding terms with the unknowable. We become known even as we are known, but so sacred is our knowledge that we do not attempt to express it.

We revolt at the thought of spiritual vivisection, the laying bare of the inmost feelings, the observing of the heartbeat of our friends, during which they must remain unconscious. Because this is so unthinkable our loving Father has made it impossible, and in this has revealed to us the nature of His own tender heart. We thank Him that He has dealt so kindly with us, that He has given us faculties to feel every shade of love and friendship and hold them so sacred as never to violate or trespass upon their godly precincts. A striking illustration of this fact we find in the biog-

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raphy of Alice Freeman Palmer. Here was a relationship of admiration, of respect, of love, of veneration which is sacred ground for the author in every page of the book. Coarse and profane and unfeeling would the narrative have been had the writer attempted to analyze the life of this soul. To him the voice did not need to cry, "Draw not nigh hither; put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground on which thou standest is holy ground." A worshiper at the sacred shrine of love and nobility, he derived the power to express the life of this notable woman in such words that they will remain a classic of penetration and discrimination and reserve in portraying the deepest phase of a human life.

When we try to solve life's great intellectual problems we hear the cry, Draw not nigh hither. We can not climb the highest peak of the intellect, there is no aeroplane capable of circling through the



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mental atmosphere at will. There are forces which hold the mind at bay just as the Colorado River defies man's approach. We are on sacred ground as we push the mind's quest. For the intellect is limited, it is not capable of coming to the very seat of the Almighty. When it approaches too near the voice rings out unmistakably, "Draw not nigh hither." It takes us a long time, sometimes, to learn this fact. As we think we can annihilate space and break down all the barriers that hold us from controlling natural resources, so do we think we can disregard the holy confines of the Most High and read His mind. Carlyle protested against the effrontery of certain men who, he said, talked as though God was their next-door neighbor and they were intimately acquainted with all His affairs. It is well for us to heed the protest of the rugged Scotch philosopher, for he well knew how sacred were the precincts of the Eternal Mind and how man

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profaned the Most High when he drew near. Well does Tennyson, in his "Ancient Sage," show that the most familiar of truths are incapable of proof:

Thou canst not prove the nameless, O, my son,  
Nor canst thou prove the world thou movest in.  
Thou canst not prove that thou art body alone  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art spirit alone  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art both in one.  
Thou canst not prove that thou art immortal, no  
Nor yet, that thou art mortal, nay, my son,  
Thou canst not prove that I who speak with thee  
Art not thyself in converse with thyself.  
For nothing worthy proving can be proven,  
Nor yet disproved, wherefore thou be wise,  
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt  
And cling to faith beyond the forms of faith.

To cling to Faith, here is the wisdom of the Ancient Sage. Job throws at God a dozen questions, and God sends back a hundred riddles; and Job finds peace. For he discovers he is on sacred ground, and God tells him unmistakably not to profane it. And his life becomes a poem of praise

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as he clings to the sunnier side of doubt and shows "the sanity of living a life of trust in a world which we can not understand." For our "keenest knowledge can not compass a tithe of the wonders that lie at [our] feet." And yet the very fact that God holds us from Him in this sense draws us very near to Him. It is the illustration of the smithy and his strong arm over again. In His wisdom God is so strong that He outdistances us as the wings of the wind outdistance the crawl of the snail, but in love He is so tender that He careth for us. "Like a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust."

So we leave a large margin for imagination which we call faith, and thank God that there are some things which He permits us to believe but not see. Thus we are saved from pride of intellect and conceit of mind, and can combine a positive faith

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with true humility such as Tennyson expressed when he said of the Almighty, "I hardly dare name His name, but take away belief in the self-conscious personality of God and you take away the backbone of the world."

We may question with wand of science  
Explain, deride, discuss,  
But only in meditation  
The mystery speaks to us.

If we could come to this form of trust, if we could thank God that He holds the deepest feelings of the soul life too sacred to trifle with, if we could recognize His dominion and appreciate how sacred it is, our attitude would become reverent, our faith positive, our trust unshakable, our spirit to obey and follow Him invincible.

## XI.

### CHRISTIANITY IN THE VERNACULAR.

SEVERAL attempts have been made to establish a universal language. They all have failed. Very early in the history of mankind, as soon as man began to multiply and spread over the earth, was there a confusion of tongues. One branch of the human race being separated from another soon developed a language peculiar to itself. Although we can find in the roots of all languages a certain similarity, this sameness is not so definitely marked as to give us a clue to the original, or at one time universal language, if ever such there was. Mankind, as far back as we know it, always was separated into different races speaking tongues foreign to each other.



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And yet there has always been a native or universal language readily understood by all peoples. There is a vernacular belonging to the speech that men and women everywhere naturally acquire, which they understand and are capable of making others understand.

We read this language first in nature—

To Him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms,  
She speaks a various language.

And this language is always understood. The storm is a storm, whether breaking in full fury over mountain peak or sweeping its flood through fertile valley or pil-ing waves in towering height on ocean's top. The Englishman in India, or the Moor in Switzerland, or the Chinaman in America understands nature as she thus speaks, for nature uses a native and not a foreign tongue. The river rolling on lazily to the great city or sea, or the lake

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in its mountain fastness mirroring cloud and sky and foliage, or the wide-spreading elm before the smith's door, or the flower modestly planted in a discarded tin can or broken dish, or the cattle on a thousand hills, or the myriad stars in the flaming heaven—all speak a language wondrously clear to the devout lover of nature. And German, Jap, Italian, Turk, and a hundred other foreign-born stand side by side looking on and say, “How hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?”

This universal language is also spoken by man in the various expressions of human life. Shakespeare tells the whole story in his characterization of “Cresida:”

There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
Nay her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out  
At every joint and motion of her body.

Who ever needed to interpret a frown or a cry of pain; a tear or an exclama-

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tion of joy; a smile or a heart-piercing groan? We walk the crowded and congested streets of Cairo or Damascus, where traffic sweeps on in a rush almost to annihilate one, and above the noise hear the sharp cry of a child fallen under the hoof of a horse, and we understand as instantly what that child has said as we should did such an occurrence take place in our own city, in front of our very door. So human nature speaks its native language of pain, anger, distress, excitement, flippancy, frivolity, calm, seriousness, discrimination, gladness, exhilaration, love. And the foreign-born look on and say, "How hear we every man in our own language wherein we were born?"

This universal language of nature and human life furthermore has had a universal interpretation which the devout soul can readily understand. The artist comes to nature in her manifold moods and takes her very soul to put on canvas, and we

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move slowly through the great galleries, forgetting that we are in a building made with human hands, heedless of the conversation or the crowd that may be about us, feeling only that we are in God's great out-of-doors, and fields and flowers, meadow and mountain, lake and river are speaking to us, wooing our fervent love. Whether the artist was an Italian or a Pole, a Russian or a Swede, or whether the scene was on the burning sands of the desert or the cool shades of a forest interior, whether a mountain in Asia or a river in America or a wide-spreading field in Tuscany or a view on the Thames, we instinctively understand, and with other appreciative souls, who also are bathing their æsthetic natures in the masterpieces of the landscape painter's art, say, "How hear we all in the language in which we were born?"

Or the artist goes to human life and draws therefrom his inspiration, and makes

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the canvas or marble vocal with all the manifold expressions of human nature. We stand before Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" and need not be told that so wonderfully has the artist depicted this woman in her gentle grace and charm that she seems to have stepped out of life and is ready to engage us in winsome and captivating converse. We look at Rembrandt's Samson demanding his wife from his father-in-law when the latter in Samson's absence had given her to another man. As we see Samson storming without, with raised fist and angry countenance, and his father-in-law fearsomely looking from the window within, we need not be told that trouble is brewing, even though we may not know what the picture is supposed to represent. Strolling through the royal galleries in Berlin, we stop suddenly arrested before a marble statue. A woman reclines in the roadside against a milestone, a little bundle of clothing beside



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her, a child on her bosom peacefully sleeping. As we look at the distressed face of the mother, thoroughly exhausted, too much so to sleep calmly, we need not be told that she came a long way and has a long way to go, for the very stone speaks. How we yearn to assist her and make her lot a more easy one. Whether we pass that figure once or a dozen times, the same feeling comes over us. That marble speaks, it speaks a universal language, and we understand. So the artist catches all the delicate shades of human expression and puts them in stone or in a frame, and appreciative souls look on and understand each in his own tongue.

As the artist, so also does the musician interpret nature and human life in universal speech. There is a language here. Music hath charms and throws her spell over all mankind. We sit and listen to the oratorio or the symphony, the violinist or the singer, and a flow of feeling comes

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rushing over us, memories of scenes and faces crowd upon us, we are living in the past, the years have thrown a halo over our childhood and youth and we live them again in golden dreams. Or we are projected into the future. We look upon that which might be, the years expand before us, we walk as in marble halls, amid fragrant odors and past cooling fountains. We forget the present, the daily toils and cares, the disappointments, the circumscribed outlooks. For at that moment the voice of the Eternal is speaking and we are lost in the Great Soul of which we are a part and which forever calls us. Music speaks its universal language and makes the deepest depths of man's being responsive. We listen and exclaim, "How hear we every man in our own tongue in which we were born?"

Now, it needs no word to say that this universal language is the soul-language; the soul of the Eternal revealing itself to

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the soul of man; the soul of man responsive to the revelation. Why did the believers in Jesus at Pentecost understand each other? There are two sentences which give us a clue to the whole situation. The one reads, "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, *devout* men out of every nation under the sun." Devout Jews who had come from all parts of the globe, who had heard of Jesus, and who now understood clearly concerning Him as Peter and the other disciples spoke of Him. And the other sentence reads, "Others *mocking* said, these men are full of new wine." On one side devout men who heard and believed; on the other, skeptics who heard and mocked. To a blind man the landscape, the picture, the smile mean little; to the deaf man the cry, the laugh, the song, the symphony mean little; to the brutal and heartless the mute appeal for help goes unheeded. To understand the Soul of the universe man must bring to it a soul

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full charged with sympathetic appreciation; to be moved by the soul of religion, man must bring his own soul into harmony therewith. For soul impressions can be made only upon an impressible soul. We know how men feel in Timbuctoo or in the South Sea Islands because we know how we feel wherever we are. One soul is always in telegraphic communication with other souls. This is the very heart of religion, and especially Christianity. Jesus needed not to be told what was in the mind of any man, for He already knew men thoroughly. While we can not presume to have such a knowledge, we can understand the vernacular of Christianity wherever spoken, for it is everywhere the same. We are told a great preacher years ago named Vincent Ferrer, preaching in Spanish, was understood by English, Flemish, French, and Italian hearers. While this may seem questionable to us who remain on the prosaic plane of every-day experi-

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ence, yet it is not at all unreasonable, and when properly understood is a verifiable fact. Professor Peabody, over his own name in the Boston *Transcript* some years ago, wrote of Professor Kuehnemann, who was lecturing in German at Harvard, that the captivating scholar was so full of his subject and had such a command of his own language that those little acquainted with German could realize what he was saying without understanding his words. This is merely soul speaking to soul in the soul's vernacular. How did the Pilgrims make themselves understood at first by the Indians? This is a question in early Colonial history that we sometimes pass over without due thought, when it is full of interest. How did the early missionaries make themselves understood by the cannibal natives, as these men full of the Soul of Christ first set out to convert the world? Here again is a law of psychic phenomena with universal application. A



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soul charged with the love of Christ somehow makes other sympathetic souls understand, and soon even the unsympathetic are impressed.

A few years ago I sat in a Protestant mission house in Rome and listened to a sermon in Italian. I understood hardly any of the language, but I comprehended the whole thought of the speaker. His eye, his face, his hand, his whole body was speaking, and the sympathetic response in his hearers, their close attention, their look and demeanor when he pressed his truth home, told a sympathetic foreigner only too well that the wonderful gospel of Jesus Christ was charming speaker and spoken-to alike, and the very air was charged with the good news.

A few years later I stood in the American mission school in the city of Tarsus, the birthplace of Saint Paul; I had made a few remarks to the students through an interpreter, and then two or three of the

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older young men arose to reply. They spoke Turkish. I understood not a word. But I needed not the office of an interpreter to tell me what they were saying. They had come out of homes in the far inland Asia Minor. They had grown to manhood without even the rudiments of learning. They were quick with a love of the Christ and for the generous American spirit that would send money and consecrated men and women to teach and train them. The light of their eyes, the movement of their lips, the quivering of their whole bodies spoke more plainly to me than their words could. I understood, because I was carried away with sympathy for that whole movement. For the moment, at least, my soul was in touch with the great soul of the universe which everywhere expresses itself in just that way, the lifting of mankind from its low estate and sending it on wings of love to its higher estate.

Our souls are a part of the Infinite Soul,

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as the wave is a part of the ocean. Lift that wave out, set it apart from its real element, and it soon evaporates. Leave it where it belongs to perform its real task and, with a million other waves eternally held in the hollow of ocean's hand, it will carry the commerce and human freight of the world. So the soul in tune with the Infinite Soul will speak the soul's vernacular and make itself understood wherever a human soul exists. A soul submerged in the Soul of Christ will speak the Christian vernacular and men everywhere will understand. We were all born in the Christian vernacular. Do we speak this language so that all can understand? Or is our speech foreign and only confusion to those with whom we associate?

## XII.

### THE VALLEY BETWEEN.

WE understand at once that where two mountains face each other there is a valley between. Yet we read that at one time "the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side *and there was a valley between them.*" It seems useless to call attention to this valley. To the writer, however, it was a significant fact. So often was there a valley between His people and their sworn enemy that unconsciously He lays strong emphasis upon the valley. For had the valley on different occasions not been there Israel could never have maintained herself. Long ago would she have been ground to dust.

The valley here stands as an interposi-

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tion of Providence between Israel and her enemy. This valley-between was a fact of great importance in the life of Israel; it is a fact of gravest consequence in the lives of most men and women. It was a natural barrier for Israel keeping Philistia at bay; so is it in our lives, keeping Israel, the good in us, from Philistia, the bad. Were it not for this valley the Philistines would soon be upon us.

Now, a valley is a depression. It is not a mountain-top, but always overshadowed by the heights. And the valley in Palestine was not broad and fertile, watered by a river, like most of our valleys. It was narrow and usually rocky and barren. It became typical of the undesirable. In figurative speech it was designated as the pass leading to misfortune or grief or utter desolation. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, says the psalmist. Isaiah speaks of the desolate valleys in the same connection with



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holes in the rocks and thorns. Jeremiah pictures the valley of dead bodies, and Ezekiel preaches on the valley of dry bones. Just outside of Jerusalem the valley of Hinnom, even unto Jesus' day, was the synonym for the place where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched.

A valley in Old Testament lands was not a very desirable place; figuratively speaking, it was not a depression which a man would want in his life. Yet the valley-between saved Israel from the Philistines. So we have valleys in our lives; valleys not pleasant and fertile, but barren and rocky; valleys we should rather have taken out of our lives or filled up. Yet these valleys save us from our worst selves.

There is the valley of poverty. In this valley we may find the lilies growing, as many a poor man has cultivated the unyielding soil of his poverty and made it blooming and fragrant. But no one will

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claim that to be poor is desirable. Have we ever considered, however, how much worse off than in their poverty many men would be did they control riches? Poverty to them is the valley that holds their worst enemies at bay. Sudden wealth will ruin almost any man. Even one who adds to his world's goods gradually will increase his desires and demands by leaps and bounds. Simple tasks that kept in rhythm with humble toil and homely surroundings are apt to be smothered in patrician longings as wealth increases. There is grave danger that the protecting valley will be filled up and an even and easy way made for the Philistine to cross over. One of the most pathetic scenes in the Bible is Samson the strong, the sunny and light-hearted, in the iron grasp of the Philistines. They could never have come upon him had he allowed the valley, which was a natural configuration between his native place and theirs, to remain. Many a home

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has been disrupted, many a relationship of love and confidence and honor destroyed, many a family altar thrown down or allowed to fall as riches have increased and the almost inevitable social ambition has arisen. We remember the incident of a husband grown immensely wealthy, putting the wife of his youth away, the wife of his early toils and struggles, the wife who helped him lay the foundations of his fortune, putting her away to follow the butterfly of a cheapened stage, and the social influence that she could perhaps bring him. Whatever he may have thought of himself, the sharpened sense of decency looked upon him as dishonored and defeated. Better the valley of poverty for him than the plateau of wealth over which his besetting sins had such easy march.

When we speak of poverty we use the word in its relative sense. Many a man who has sufficient income and estate to give his family the comforts of a home and the

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necessary advantages in life may regard himself as a poor man in relation to those who have hundreds of thousands and millions. But blessed is that man if he looks upon his condition as the valley-between, holding the enemies of his best self at bay. Many of us would be no better than the immensely wealthy whom we decry were it not for the valley lying between our circumscribed conditions and their unlimited opportunity. The good we sometimes manifest is not always the result of virtue. It may be due to the valley divinely interposed between our unrestrained desires and their evil consequences. Moderate circumstances, although at times they may be depressing, ought to give us no occasion for discouragement. As we come fully to understand ourselves, we shall find that God in withholding possessions from us has given competent proof that He is with us.

Again, our inability to command certain

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things, entailing the necessity to work hard for what we get, must be looked upon as the friendly valley saving us from defeat. Many a young man of great talents has allowed these to go undeveloped because there was no necessity for him to ask where the next bite to eat was coming from. As it is hard for a rich man to go through the eye of a needle, so is it hard for a talented man to go through the narrowing process of development if he is relieved from the strain of self-support. The youth who is forced to work his way through college, instead of being dissatisfied or depressed, ought to take courage and look upon the toil he is put to as the friendly valley that is saving him from laziness or indifference, perhaps; surely from regarding success in life as assured where great talent are in evidence. And in after life, when face to face with the demands of his profession, blessed is he if forced to earn his own living. For here is the valley



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that shall save him from idleness and the squandering of his mental and spiritual gifts.

There is also the valley of misfortune. We look upon misfortune with a coldly fixed stare. We see in it nothing but an intense, a bitter fact. It has only a repelling look. Yet misfortune is to be judged entirely from a different point of view. It was a great misfortune for the man in Scripture to be blind or a paralytic. This misfortune to Jesus, however, was a point of contact, giving Him an opportunity to save such a man from a real calamity: a sin-diseased soul. To return to our figure, misfortune, if truly appreciated, may be the knowledge suddenly brought home to us that the Philistines are encamped yonder on the heights and that only a valley lies between us and annihilation. Now, I should not want to be understood as suggesting an easily interpreted philosophy of misfortune, or lead

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to the inference that misfortune comes as a punishment, and that they who do not have misfortunes are thus freed because they merit only Heaven's smile. I am merely suggesting that misfortune may come to us in the guise of a blessing, that although it may seem to be a valley of the shadow of death: death to material prosperity or comfort, it may be a valley of the brightness of life: life for the soul, life that gives opportunity for discovering and developing spiritual resources. If there were never a valley of misfortune for us, we should be proud and high-minded. If we were never taken down from our exalted state by easy approaches, our fall would be sudden and into the depths. Continued misfortune may be a series of blessings, placing the valley between us and a worse fate.

Circumscribed power, or limited opportunity to exercise power, is another valley of salvation in the life of many a man. We know how jealous a man is of the

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power he possesses, how arbitrarily and excessively he is apt to use it, and how arrogant he is in danger of becoming. "There is no stronger test of a man's real character," said Plutarch, "than power and authority, exciting as they do every passion, and discovering every latent vice." "The last thing we should endow a man with is power," said Lincoln, "because it is the last thing he is willing to lay down." Our lives are laid out providentially, therefore, when the valleys of necessary restraint are marked. Unbridled power may continue for the night, but sober judgment comes with the morning. Heads of kings and princes have been cut off as they have taken the bit in their mouths. A rule or ruin régime fails in both its designs and recoils upon the one who would establish it. For the aroused sense of what is just and right and best will sooner or later curb the rule and prevent the ruin. To save man from the exer-

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cise of unlimited power the valleys of restraint are interposed. If men could be as strong and untrammelled in the control of destiny or of hidden resources as they desire to be, there would be neither justice nor judgment, toleration nor restraint. Even a little power is enough to turn a man's head. As we make a practical and personal application of this fact, we begin to see what bearing it has upon our lives. Were it not for the valley-between, the unbridled Philistines of envy, dislike, animosity would take hold of us. We should crush those whom we do not favor or who do not favor us in the crucible of our power.

In this connection we might speak of knowledge as power. This power man is ever more trying to possess. But a certain danger lurks in unlimited knowledge. There was one tree in the Garden the fruit of which Adam and Eve were not to eat. Speech was confounded when the children

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of Israel undertook to build a tower high enough to reach the heavens and learn its secrets. There are some things, evidently, man is never to know, and many others which he must learn only gradually. In this sense the silences of God are like so many valleys which He interposes between the power we not only could but would exercise were we wise. There is much that the Almighty wants us to accept by faith and not by sight, to believe although we do not see. For knowledge which comes through faith brings the kind of joy a man has when he sees his ships which he sent across the waters on a venture return full of rich cargo. Of course all knowledge is based on faith, but because we can see so many things with the naked eye, we have a faculty of declaring that only the things thus seen are real. To save us from crushing defeat by materialistic forces on the sense plane a valley is interposed until we become intellectually acquainted with our-



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selves. A knowledge not based on faith would be equal to infinite knowledge and would be a weapon in man's hands where-with he would do himself grave injury. As we frankly profess ignorance of things too high and mighty for us we keep the Philistines in our nature at bay.

The lesson of the valley-between can be carried much further and be more variedly illustrated. Its truth is clear. The valleys of God are interposed between our best and our worst selves to keep our enemies from rushing upon us. In poverty or moderate circumstances or misfortune or circumscribed fields of action or limited opportunities we can read the lesson of the valley-between and thank God that He knows us so well and cares for us so wisely. But there is a closing word that needs to be said. The valley-between kept the Philistines from moving upon Israel at once. And this suggests that the valley also gave the Israelites time to prepare to

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meet the enemy. Let us note what happened. The Philistines, in the form of the giant Goliath, came swaggering and threatening into the valley to challenge Israel. A champion comes forth to accept the challenge. He is but a lad, and the Israelites themselves are surprised at his audacity. Small and frail he surely is in comparison with the giant. Furthermore, he would fight with no weapon of recognized warfare. The king, in consternation, can not leave him to go to certain death. He must have the king's armor and the king's sword. But when these are put on him, and he has rattled around in them, the king sees they are not fit for him. So, with the only weapons to which he was used, unusual though these were, and acting only as himself, David goes down into the valley. Soon he stands on the huge hulk of the lifeless enemy. Let us not hesitate to use the truth conveyed in this story at its full face value. As we are

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fighting the foe we need go equipped only in our natural strength and with weapons lying ready to hand. We can take them from God's clear stream of truth, and hurl them unerringly with the arm of godly purpose He has given us. And we need never be disturbed when those who are used to a king's armor and sword laugh at our pebbles and sling. The Jews put a reed into Jesus' hand as a mocking sign of His scepter. With it He has conquered the world and bids us prepare for our own struggle in the same spirit and with the same strength.

### XIII.

#### LIFE'S COUNTERPOISE.

JESUS was on His way to Galilee from Jerusalem with His disciples. All morning they had been climbing a steep and rocky hill, over the brow of which they had just come down to Jacob's Well. Wearied, thirsty and hungry, Jesus rests at the well while His disciples go to a nearby village, a little off from the road they were traveling, to fetch some food. During their absence a woman from the village comes to draw water. At the very sight of her Jesus is changed from a tired Traveler into a ministering Savior. There is a counteracting force in the very nature of His being that causes Him to forget His material wants and leads Him to supply a spiritual need. As in mechanics a weight is used to balance the vibrating parts of

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machinery upon their axis so as to cause them to turn freely and to require little power to set them in motion, so was there such a weight or counterpoise in the being of Jesus that balanced the vibrating elements of life upon that central axis of love and service, which made all His forces respond to the slightest indication of a human need and caused them to turn freely to its amelioration. This counterpoise in Jesus' nature kept in proper balance the material and the spiritual and enabled Him without neglecting the one to give the other its sufficient emphasis.

His disciples could not understand this. Coming from the village, more tired than when they left their Master, they are surprised to see Him engaged in conversation with a woman. They wait patiently until the conversation is finished, and then urge upon Him their food. Jesus sat down and ate with them. But seeing their anxious concern for His physical welfare as well



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as their own, and realizing how little they comprehended the sustaining power of the spiritual life, He says to them with a grandeur and dignity that lift His words quite out of the ordinary, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." He had entered that lofty sphere of sympathy and service whence He drew strength for the supply of all who came to Him as well as for Himself. His disciples were still on the plain of the earthy, anxious to minister to their material needs. They had not discovered this counterpoise in Jesus' nature. There was something in His life that made Him transcendent above every other life they knew, but His secret they had not discerned. Jesus was in the world, that they knew; and that He was not of the world, they instinctively felt. Further than this, however, they did not penetrate into Jesus' character. Jesus alone in the consciousness of His inner nature knew the secret of His repose, that power which

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made Him appear so different from all other men. He had meat to eat the world knew not of. In the wilderness, when confronted by the tempter, He stood triumphant before him because of the meat which the tempter knew not. In the fierce conflicts of His life, when assailed by friend or foe alike, when even His own household failed to understand Him and said He was beside Himself, He walked in the tranquillity of peace, for He had meat to eat they knew not of. During the agonizing passion in Gethsemane and the excruciating pain on Golgotha He proved to the world the sustaining power of the meat which the world knew not of. In life and death, in resurrection and exaltation Jesus revealed the strength and the stimulus of that heavenly manna on which He constantly fed. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

Here was the counterpoise that perfectly adjusted Jesus to His life, that made the

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spiritual counteract the material, that controlled all the forces of His being so that they responded to the purpose of His life and ministry. Here we face so significant a feature in Jesus' nature that we are apt to forget He was human and lay stress only on the fact that He was divine. This counterpoise in Jesus' life, however, was not due primarily to His divinity, but to His humanity. We are not here in the presence of something mysterious, something that can be explained only on the ground of the superhuman, and which, therefore, as we explain it, we must attribute to Jesus a nature essentially different from our own. Jesus in this instance was making no claim in regard to His peculiar divinity. He was revealing to His disciples His common humanity. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of, not because I am divine and you are human, but because I understand true humanity and you have not as yet discov-

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ered its essence." Let us not forget that Jesus makes His strongest appeal to man, not on the ground of His divinity, but on the ground of His humanity. For He came into the world as a man, born of a human mother, in order to reveal man to man, in order to show man his possibilities, to tell him that there is lodged within him a divine element that is his true, his real self; to urge him to discover this element in his own soul and to develop it in all its expanding powers, until man should live and move and have his being in God. For true humanity is real divinity. Jesus was such a Man as God at the creation intended all men to be. He held a perfect relation both to God and man, not because He lived supernaturally, but because He lived naturally, because He held a perfect counterpoise between the material and the spiritual, between earth and heaven. By being truly human, He was also truly divine.

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This is the overmastering significance of Jesus' revelation. He put it in the power of every man to discover that he is a child of God as well as a son of man. Hence He called Himself not God, but the Son of God, and urged the children of men to be sons of God, for unto that end were they born. Thus revealing Himself, Jesus towers above all mankind in the sublimity of His human nature. So stupendous is this fact that if we really can comprehend it we shall see in the very humanity of Jesus His divinity.

As Jesus was on the plane of the human when He spoke to His disciples and taught the multitude, He did not bring any message too difficult for man to comprehend or set man any task which he could not fulfill. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," He said, but He did not imply, "You can never know of this meat." He implied the very opposite, and in this sense Jesus' words were a rebuke to His dis-



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ciples, for the least physical fatigue and hunger threw them down on the plane of the material and blunted their susceptibilities to the spiritual. The deeper the thought that is comprehended, the keener is the medium of comprehension. Where the mind fails to grasp an idea it is either not yet active or it is still undeveloped. The latter was the situation of the disciples, and they therefore gave a secondary meaning to Jesus' words, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of," for they looked at each other in amazement and said: "What is He talking about? Has any one brought Him something to eat?" Note the contrast in Jesus. Spirit was answering to Spirit, Spirit was feeding upon Spirit and accomplishing the work of Spirit. In the disciples the order was reversed. It was spirit answering to and serving matter, the body, the external world, the physical wants and human pleasures of man.

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It took the disciples a long time to understand Jesus' point of view, to see God in the world everywhere about them as Jesus revealed Him, to appreciate that the essence, the reality of the material world is the spiritual. Jesus ministering to them in His sublime humanity showed them that to be really human man can not depend alone on physical bread and meat for his sustenance. This is the mere sensual, that which ministers to the animal in man. Man was not created as the brute beast, with his eyes and mouth turned to the ground. He has an upward look, an aspiration that lifts him above the earth to that which is spiritual, to that which the physical eye and ear and tongue can neither see nor hear nor taste, but which only the soul of man can grasp and enjoy. As man must develop from the lower to the higher, so must he learn how to detach himself from the material and live in the spiritual.

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It is difficult for us to realize this. The spirituality, we say, of Jesus' nature is to be accounted for on the ground of His divinity. Human beings can not expect to reach such an exalted state. We reason thus because we are so chained to the material that we can not appreciate the dominance of the spiritual in our lives. It is like going into a dense forest where we can see only trees and leaves, but no sky overhead and only now and then realize that the sun is somewhere as we see its rays glinting through the gloom. And yet the highest sweep of our natures is in the spiritual. The best that we enjoy in life is found there. Our real pleasures swing loose from their material environment, our souls speak to and hear other souls, we have companionship and consolation with our friends, whether they be human beings or printed books. When all other help or comfort fails us, we are nourished on the food that the world knows not of.

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Jesus shows us this secret of strength, this counterpoise of life. As He lived, He gives us hope to live also. It is possible, we feel, to detach ourselves from the material and live in the spiritual. Paul and Augustine, Francis of Assisi, and Martin Luther, John Henry Newman, and Phillips Brooks show us that this is possible. These men all had meat to eat the world knew not of. They grew strong thereon: strong in repose and composure, strong in faith and conviction, strong in fidelity to duty that sent them forth in calm and tranquil, but confident, adherence to righteous purpose. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to accomplish His work."

While history's estimate of the work and worth of such men may vary, it can not rob them of that glory which crowns them as real men. For they discovered the essence of humanity. Like their Master, the counterpoise of life to them was that spir-

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itual food and force that fitted them for life in the higher altitude of being and released them from the petty cares and trials of life. How truly Newman, *e. g.*, could say to his virulent accuser, who would rob him of all that any man can truly own in this world—his character, “I have meat to eat that you know not of.” He had his sorrows, and they were pangs of bitterness, but he also had his joys, and they were precious morsels. He could take his secret place at the table spread by his Lord and eat of that heavenly food with a thankfulness too deep for words. And how many other men and women like him do we know in history?

But we need not look only to great careers for testimony of this spiritual nourishment that feeds the soul. Look into our own hearts and lives. Have we not had those moments when we seemed to have been born under a cloud and all was dark about us and our souls were



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racked with doubt and our brains reeled in confusion, and we were ready to say, "What is the use; why should we try to rise above our surroundings, we can not better them any way?" Or have we not been tempted to run away from our problems and perplexities and let others solve them? Have we not had such moments, and have we not then heard the voice of our truer selves, our real humanity, say, "Why magnify your troubles, your trials; you have meat to eat that they know not of?" And has that not been a supreme moment of triumph, a moment of calm assurance and satisfaction, when we could forget fatigue and hunger and the wearisome noises of the world and the conflicting voices that shriek and howl about us. And we have turned to our duty, plain and commonplace though it was, and with calm serenity have answered those who feared we were starving because we did not care for the food they urged us to

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eat, "We have meat to eat that you know not of." And when they have looked on in surprise or even remonstrance at our attitude, we have found a deeper joy in being able to say to them, "Know ye not that our meat is to do the will of Him that sent us and to accomplish His work?"

Happy is the man, the woman, who can look upon such moments of life and say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." This is the food that gives us strength for our highest duty, that enables the business man in the sharp competition of trade to keep his hands clean and go through life in a happy, even although it may be a humble, sphere. This is the food that strengthens the lawyer, the judge, the statesman to seek truth and pursue it, to advocate honesty, to decide righteously, to legislate soberly and well. This is the food that strengthens the physician and the teacher to ameliorate suffering and lessen ignorance, to help weakened bodies and en-

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courage struggling minds with the spirit of the great Teacher and Physician who came to give life and to give it more abundantly. This is the food that strengthens the artisan, the mechanic, the salesman, every one who toils with his hands and brain, to go forth to his labor with joy and continue thereat in peace. This is the food that strengthens the mother to give her life for her children, to make their home a heavenly abiding place. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Meat that transforms the home, the school, the Church, the mart, the State, that makes of them all powerful institutions for righteousness, that declares in no uncertain tone that the Kingdom of God is at hand; the food that changes man from the likeness of an animal into the image of his God.

"I have meat to eat that ye know not of." To be able to say this, to look with calm composure upon the material world from our abiding place in the spiritual,

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to meet sorrow and joy, success and failure, the good-will of our friends, the harsh criticism of our foes, because we have found life's counterpoise; this is that high estate of human existence that makes life truly divine, for it partakes of that Spirit which God sent into this world to quicken and save it.

#### XIV.

##### AND ANOTHER SHALL GIRD THEE.

THREE times Jesus says to Simon Peter: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Twice Peter answers: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. And Jesus replies, Feed My sheep. The third time Peter is more assertive: Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus says again, Feed My sheep. He then adds: Verily, verily, I say unto thee: When thou wast young thou girdest thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldest not. "Feed My sheep." "Another shall gird thee." A command on the one hand to go and do. A reminder



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on the other of his inability to do. Why, we may ask, should Jesus give the command thrice repeated, and then seemingly take the very heart out of Peter by telling him he would soon be useless, another would gird him and lead him whither he would not go?

Did Jesus mistrust Peter? Ah, no! He was teaching him a lesson. Peter was in the exuberance of a new experience. His soul was shot through with the wonderful power of Christ's gospel. To him, as to St. Paul later, it was Jesus crucified and risen from the dead. Here was a message that would batter down the armed opposition to God's truth more surely than the battering ram of a Roman cohort would break the door of a besieged city. Jesus sees Peter's enthusiasm and knows his honesty of purpose. But it is the enthusiasm of an inexperienced man on the very threshold of his career with a confidence of power so strong that its very strength

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was a danger. Peter might be carried away by his enthusiasm and miss the goal of his endeavors; he might lose himself in the abyss of over self-estimation. So Jesus warns him. "Now thou art strong; thou canst draw tight thy girdle about thee, and tuck in the folds of thy garment and go forth untrammelled to journey or toil. But remember, the days must come when thou shalt stretch forth thy hand and another shall gird thee. So learn to submit now."

This is the lesson Jesus would teach us. So far canst thou go and no further. We must lean on others, we must lean on Another. Our strength to do will grow out of our willingness to submit. This is life's lesson. It is not easily learned. Like many another lesson, it is spurned or slighted at the very time we ought to learn it. Youth wants to gird itself. The child grows in its own estimation the moment it is able to lace its shoes without assist-

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ance. This is something to talk about. The chasm between helpless babyhood and the confidence of youth has been bridged. So the boy girds himself and walks whither he would. From the point of lacing his shoes he passes by quick strides to that of determining his will and his well-being. The counsel of parents and teachers is well intentioned, but in extremely bad taste when directed at a youth who can gird himself. He will choose his books, he will choose his companions, he will choose his occupations. Thus girding himself, by the irony of fate he is drawn to minds and characters which have likewise girded themselves and walked whither they would. It is a big thing to be the chum of a boy who has an utter contempt for restraint. And a little later he fairly bristles with importance as he turns the pages of the unfortunates who have lost their bearings and repudiated the faiths of their mothers. He is not able to understand the circum-

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stances or currents which drove these men out to the open sea adrift in a small boat without compass or rudder and no knowledge of the shore; but only he is unaware of his inability. He girds himself and grows bigger and more daring as he absolutely despises the thought of dependence and accountability. Fundamental truths! What are they? Who can determine them? On a bright night he will look into the starry heavens and delight to shock his mates with the assertion of his disbelief in God. He will quote disconnected verses from the Book of Ecclesiastes, the meaning of which he does not understand, but which on the surface seem to give him Biblical warrant for repudiating the being of God and His intimate relations to this world. His room-mate who would dare to kneel beside his bed at night, as he kneeled beside his mother's knee when a child, and pray to the Unseen Presence, he would ridicule or laugh to scorn. What a delu-

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sion is prayer! No greater act of self-deception is conceivable. To such a one, would he but hear, the very wings of the wind bear the warning, "Another shall gird thee!" Would he but look he would see painted across the signboards of nature and of history the words, "And another shall gird thee!"

Or there is the youth full of healthy fun and serious ambition. We look to him in the fondness of hope. We admire his powers of intellect and will. He is a possibility. The whole illimitable world of mind and matter is before him. We see in him an evidence of the eternal. We dare set no bounds to what he may achieve. We remember, not without some feeling of regret, that what we hoped in our youth to accomplish has never been realized. But none of us will be hardy enough to say that because our ideals were not reached he also must fail. We rather say our own powers were limited. We look



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at him in possession of all the vigor of youthful endowment and with life before him, and feel there is a far better career for him than there was for us. And he, too, has something of this same feeling. The warm blood courses through his veins; his heart tingles with the desire to get up and do. Who knows but that he can fill the place which hitherto no man could reach? Has he not vitality of muscle and mind? Is there not something tugging away at his heart-strings pulling him onward? Is he not able to gird himself and walk forward untrammelled? Thus he reasons, for he is looking through the field-glass of youth. And this brings everything nearer to him. He looks in at the small end of his inexperience and the world is magnified. The mountain-top he would reach is brought within arm's length and he can almost talk with the gods who inhabit that rarified region. But as he toys with this glass he finds himself uncon-

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sciously turning it around. He looks in at the big end and he becomes aware that the world is receding from him. The hills are still clear, but how much higher are they now, and farther away! And how deep the valleys through which he must patiently plod before he can begin the ascent! The maturer man looks at life through the big end of his experience. And his world is never magnified. While it may seem to have become more reduced in size than it is in fact, still he can not escape the knowledge that his world and the actual world are removed by leagues of space which it will not be his to cross. He will begin to see the bigness of the world and the littleness of himself. He will realize that the world is not dependent upon him; that his presence here is as a footprint on the sand which the next roll of the ocean will forever wash out, or as a drop of rain which falls into the river. In the waves and in the rain he will hear the voice of

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the inevitable, "And another shall gird thee." With many other earnest souls, he will be driven to ask, "What am I?" And the answer will be:

"An infant crying in the night;  
An infant crying for the light;  
And with no language but a cry."

In the buoyancy of youth and of inexperience we think we are girding ourselves and walking whither we would. But we need only to look within to see that we must stretch out our hands and be girded. Our thoughts, whose are they? Our own? Yes, if we have really thought them. But our own only in the sense that the air we breathe is our own. This world would be a vacuum if it depended upon any power of man to fill it with air. The mind of man would be vacuous if it depended upon his ability to supply it with the materials of thought. Our lungs draw in the air from the outside and the machinery of our

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bodies is kept in motion. The body is as dependent upon air as the boiler is upon water. So our minds take from the outside world the materials for thought. Nature kindly girds us and gives us the power to go forward and think according to the strength of our minds. Only thus is thought possible.

Then, there is the element of time. He who would say, "Go to, I will gird myself and be supreme," must reckon with the moments and the hours. Who can walk or run against time? Who can sit still in spite of time? He who can stay its flight can control the ebb and flow of the tides. "I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." Here the preacher would leave us in the eternally grinding mill of time, perchance to be

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ground fine. But the psalmist fastening upon the same truth, turns away from self and surroundings to Him who reels off the minutes of the day, and hence who controls time and chance, and exclaims, "My times are in Thy hands; deliver me."

As the tragedy rises step by step until it overwhelms him in its climax, Hamlet remarks, "The rest is silence." We read a book, we are led on from scene to scene, we seem actually to live the life of the novel, we are anxious to know the outcome, we read the last sentence, "The rest is silence." We can imagine what we will about the further life of the people who spoke and acted in the book; but so far as the author is concerned, the rest is silence. The last moment of our school days has come. We remember the exercises, the applause, the awarding of the diplomas, the rest is silence. No more will those days speak for us. The last hours of our college course have arrived. Little by little



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the moments register the events of our university life. The dying strains of the music are hushed, the last farewells spoken, we hold diplomas in our hands, but the rest is silence. We look not into the past with its multitude of voices; we look into the future and as yet no voice speaks. So through life we go. In the springtime of youth we would gird ourselves and go whither we would, and we feel confident we can; in the strength of manhood we would still gird ourselves and go whither we would, but we are learning how to stretch forth our hands and let another gird us and lead whither we would not; in the hallowed serenity of old age we know our lesson, we stretch forth our hands willingly to be girded by another, we gladly, trustingly follow whithersoever He leadeth.

We have seen our friend grow in the beauty of submission. In the firmness of his faith his face at times seemed to be transfigured. We remember his sturdy

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walk, his strong voice as it led us to the throne of God. We saw him grow feeble, enter the sanctuary, feel his way tremblingly to his seat. Then we saw him borne in by loving hands; we heard the tender words spoken in affectionate tribute, we looked a last time upon his face, we saw him lowered beneath the sod, we heard the words, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes," and the rest was silence. "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." But He who said these words also said, "Let not your heart be troubled; I go to prepare a place for you."

The block of marble is dug out of the earth and is set before the artist. In it he sees the statue of an angel. With coarse tools and heavy mallets and powerful strokes his apprentice will knock off great pieces as the master has directed until the crude form of the statue stands out. But

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no further can the novice go. It is the artist with fine tools and delicate strokes who carefully, tenderly, chisels out and smoothes over until the very soul of the angel speaks. So is man detached and set down among his fellows. God sees the angel in him. But he needs the bold, strong, hard strokes of the world to bring out the semblance of his form. If he remained at its mercy, however, he would be ruined as surely as the statue would be marred under the heavy and bungling strokes of the apprentice. He needs to come under the hands of the artist, for it is not his external form, but his eternal being that is to be brought out. So gently and surely will the Master work. No blow falls in vain or needlessly. No stroke is misplaced. Under His hand the soul steps forth, ready for its place in the heavenly palace, and overcome with gratitude and love, exclaims, "Thy gentleness hath made me great."

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“Another shall gird thee.” Will we resist? Then the blows will fall heavy and fast and our lives will be hard and unlovely. “Another shall gird thee.” Will we submit? Then our strength, our real selves, the divine that is in us, will gently but skillfully be brought out, we may be led whither we would not, but it will be the Master who leads. I am the Way. My yoke is easy and My burden is light. Follow Me.







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